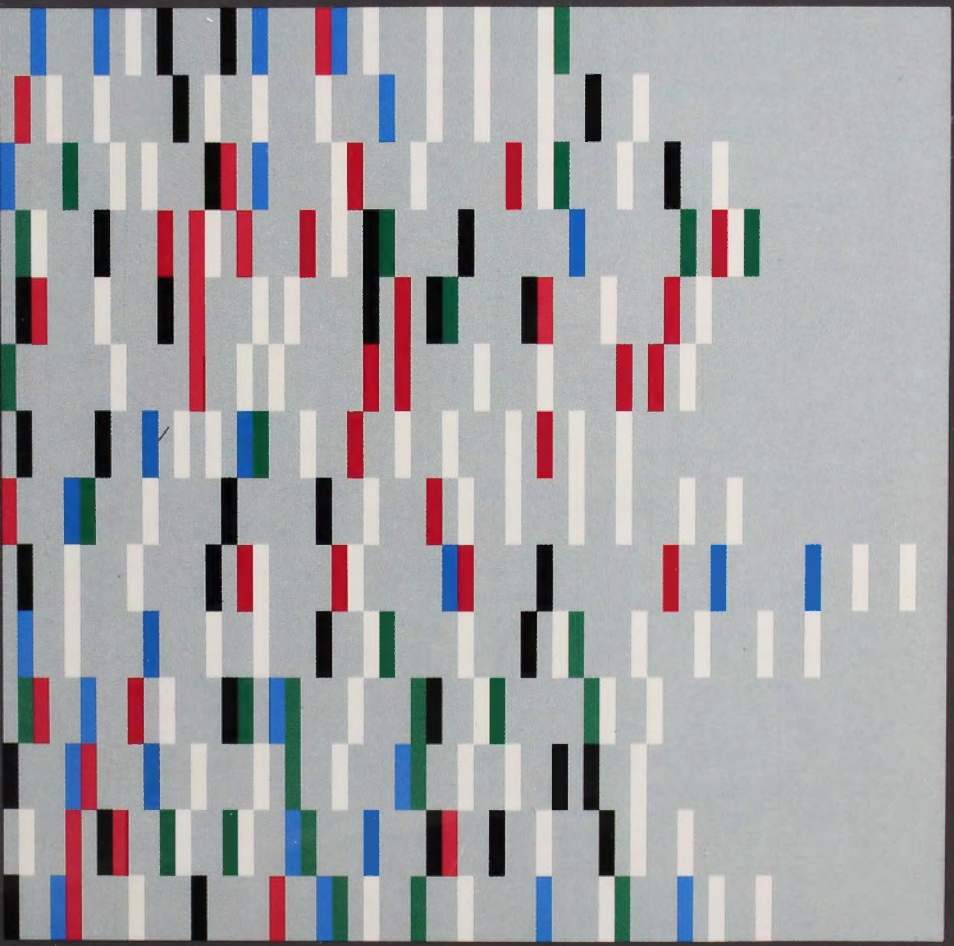
Sulfur 44



Anglophone Poetry & Poetics
Outside the US and UK

Guest-edited by Jenny Penberthy & Marjorie Perloff

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SPRING 1999

A LITERARY BI-ANNUAL OF THE WHOLE ART

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COVER: "Of Yellow" by Christian Bök is a translation of the sonnet "Voyelle" by Arthur Rimbaud. Vowels have been replaced with blocks of color according to the schema described in the sonnet itself: "A noir, E blanc, I rouge, U vert, O bleu: voyelles." All other letters, commas and spaces, etc. are grey.

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INTRODUCTION

Multiculturalism, we know, does not necessarily translate into multinationalism. In the United States today, "foreign" literatures get increasingly short shrift, especially in the case of poetry, given the difficulties of translation. But what seems especially odd is that Anglophone poetries from other nations, poetries that should be quite accessible, are so little known, even in avant-garde circles.

Consider the major U.S. anthologies of the past decade. In the Preface to his groundbreaking anthology of language poetry, *In the American Tree* (Orono: National Poetry Foundation, 1986), Ron Silliman remarked that "for reasons of space and clarity, I have excluded poets working in other nations, such as [Steve] McCaffery, Tom Raworth, Christopher Dewdney or Allen Fisher" (p. xx). Space, yes, but why clarity, given that a Canadian poet like Steve McCaffery was actively collaborating with such U.S. language poets as Bruce Andrews and Charles Bernstein? When Paul Hoover was commissioned by Norton to edit a large volume to be called *Postmodern American Poetry* (1994), it was evidently a given that he would limit himself to bona fide "Americans." In *From the Other Side of the Century: A New American Poetry 1960-1990* (Los Angeles: Sun and Moon, 1994), Douglas Messerli does include five poets nominally Canadian among the eighty-one in his anthology: again McCaffery, along with bpNichol, Christopher Dewdney, Nicole Brossard, and Robin Blaser. But Brossard is published in translation from the French and Robin Blaser, born in Colorado and coming of age in San Francisco, is more usually claimed as an American poet: indeed, in *Poems for the Millennium, Vol. 2: From Postwar to Millenium* (University of California Press, 1998), Jerome Rothenberg and Pierre Joris describe Blaser as the "last survivor of that near-mythic trio of poets at the root of the San Francisco Renaissance—the other two being Robert Duncan & Jack Spicer" (220). We note, however, that Robin Blaser has lived in Canada for the last thirty-two years.

Millenium 2 is especially curious in its take on Anglophone poetries. Rothenberg and Joris's blockbuster anthology is wonderfully inclusive when it comes to poets from France and Germany and Italy,

China and Japan, the Bengali poet Malay Roy Choudhuri (from Calcutta) and the Mazatec oral poet Maria Sabina. The Swedish group Cobra is very well represented as are the Chinese Misty Poets and the Tammuzi Poets who write in Arabic. At the same time, the only Canadians in the volume are again McCaffery, Nichol, Blaser, and Brossard, and there isn't a single poet in the volume from Australia, New Zealand, or South Africa.

Perhaps these relatively young poetry cultures are considered insufficiently exotic, on the one hand (they are not, for example, flamboyant oral poets like the Yoruba poet Amos Tutuola) or, on the other, insufficiently sophisticated like the Vienna group or Fluxus. Yet, as we hope the following selections will reveal, much of the excitement in Anglophone poetry is now coming, not from the two big nations, the US and the UK, but precisely from the former Commonwealth countries in question. Australia now has some of the leading experimental poetry magazines, ranging from James Taylor's *Boxkite* to John Kinsella's *Salt* and *Kunapipi* to John Tranter's electronic magazine *Jacket*, which has a rich and scholarly blend of international and Australian contributions. There are similar "little magazines" as well as small-press books being produced in New Zealand and South Africa and especially in Canada, which is perhaps the most exciting Anglophone poetry scene today and hence the most heavily represented here.

Contemporary Canadian poets are by no means a coherent group. McCaffery, who began his career as a post-concrete poet and a member of the sound-text group The Four Horsemen, is very different from the Oulipo-influenced Christian Bök, from such feminist innovators as Erin Mouré and Lisa Robertson, or from such performative poets as Catriona Strang, Doug Barbour, and the African-Arcadian narrative poet George Elliott Clarke. In the Commentary section, we have included essays that give a sense of these differences: for example, Susan Clark on the place of the journal *Raddle Moon* in the larger culture, Peter Hudson on the place of African-Canadian oral poetry in eastern Canada, Marnie Parsons on the renewal of Newfoundland traditions, and Sharon Thesen on the reevaluation of bpNichol's oeuvre.

While we've drawn the line at accepting translations into English, we recognize that many of the Anglophone poets in this issue live and write within other linguistic cultures: Erin Mouré and George Elliott Clarke in Quebec, Khulile Nxumalo in Soweto, Louis Armand in Prague, Rachel Tzvia Back in Israel. In these and other contributions, there is an interesting bicultural awareness. The Maori language, for instance, predominates in New Zealander Margaret Orbell's elegy for Gordon Walters written both as poem and scholarly study of the Maori

funeral lament and in artist and poet Leigh Davis's flag project—a recovery of nineteenth century Maori history—reviewed by Wystan Curnow. At least two of the South African contributions are shaped by the languages of testimony to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the recently completed national project which addressed the trauma of apartheid through a judicial, oral-historical process.

As in any issue such as this, there are lacunae. We wish our call for papers had brought in submissions from India and Pakistan, Singapore and Hong Kong, and more submissions from the Caribbean and from the Anglophone African countries. But given these limits, we have cast our net as wide as possible. We hope, in any case, to convince U.S. readers, dependent as they are on bookstores and media that manage to ignore the very existence of Coach House Books or the Kootenay School of Writing or *Salt* or John Higgins's South African theory/poetry journal *Pretext* that there is a lot going on elsewhere, and that, if the study of postmodern poetry in English wants to take itself seriously, it cannot afford to confine itself to U.S. poetry.

We thank Clayton Eshleman for his great generosity in allowing us to guest-edit this issue and giving us an entirely free rein. And suffice it to say that we are indebted to email and the internet without which it would be difficult for two editors living 1,000 miles apart on the long West Coast to work together on the issue. It has been, for us, a very fruitful exchange.

Jenny Penberthy, Vancouver
Marjorie Perloff, Los Angeles

LOUIS ARMAND

3 POEMS

PSYCHOPATHOLOGIES OF THE COMMONPLACE

for Robert Creeley

inchoate & always coming back to a point of starting out
"before the air mirrored us"
the zero of endless (re)birth in conjugations of "to be"
& other non-places? times square,
for example, or caught mid-flight above the date line
like an embryonic consciousness. . .
but what does it matter to have been, here or there? the same
narrative of disappointment in the eyes of everyone. . .
or alone crossing an intersection "somewhere"
was it strange that the scene never appeared to be questioned
by our passing it? that the intimacy of streetlights
was nothing more than a wished-for recognition
of ourselves in the embrace of the inanimate (at dusk
in a half-familiar suburb, or menaced by the distant
barking of a dog, cerberus-like, guarding each avenue
of escape). . .& being lost
always in the unspecific "as though, & as though"
with our motives no longer returning
in the disguise of ordinary things, even when it seemed
they were all written down (the testimonials, the witnessed
accounts of mundane fact). . .but when in time
we are left to the dumb-show of our shadows' diminishing
how will we know which of those meanings
ever concerned us? "today or tomorrow or today"
as if there were a difference

in the way it would end: that stupid blinking of an eye
exhausted of perception
& afterwards to remember, to name it at last, even as the
words
break off & no longer resemble us (did they ever?)

SERIAL LANDSCAPE: ANAMORPHOSIS 1

archaic regression into the optical
apparatus–irreal–here
& there a shadow passes–
vegetative-form of repetition /
ritual:
low grave mounds [concealed?
vestige of ancient fertility rites
[massacre (myall creek, 1838)]
overgrown with nettles-human silage–
a bone field
where femur-like protrudences scrape
dry air-disjecta membra–
each divided
in the ellipsis of its trait. . .anomalous
forms encamped at the edge
of visibility [a farrago of
deliberate solecisms? gilgamesh looms
vitreous
in the rear-view: signs destination. . .
the geometrical instincts
of a divided body–
phantom limbs in the grip of mimicry
reaching out of landfills–prosthetic–
to irrigated [wastelands?
("a swarm of interpretations surrounds

each of their gestures")—
cata-lepsis on the verge of
the un-nameable: knowing that a carcass
        can become-[in time]-
        a fossil
carrying [indictments?
        into the remote future. . .
or inner framework that joins
the in-visible
        to an other-visible?

SERIAL LANDSCAPE: ANAMORPHOSIS 2

through the vanishing point eye of prey
fugitive beings
naked, almost-in visible purgatory

bruised cadaverous forms (of) flesh
-ed similitude
cannibalized, de/noun/ce everything

"the real," negative images-the accursed
land too old too alien
in rocks & bones & languages so close to death

anthropomorphous trees

white
petrifications set into a mineral distance

RACHEL TZVIA BACK

PALIMPSEST OF PLACE

Swell of hills across
Judea
stretch
to open clear
between peaks where
sky
slips lower
into smooth cols–
down slender neck, as sweat
in crook of a collarbone–
sloped stunted shrubs
half-burnt trees or absent
trees
coal dust on gnarled
thornbushes, their tufted centers
thick in place of
and the air
parched,
its edges curling inward like bleached and
brittle parchment

here, in midday
mid-range
at footslip on incline, where stones scattered
are white markings
to nowhere
in the bright glare of rays deflecting
what I believe
I see
a dark and heavy shape

move
a buffalo
wandered far from white
cedar hickory red-berried hawthorne
wild and ice-laced
his curled horns downturned
head he carries low
and cannot raise but to shoulder level I think
I see his body
heave
in this heat in this wavering
air under the weight
of this wide flame-white eastern
sky

On Americans plains there were once
sixty million, here
there were none

though now I see him
here
as though returning
a remnant–
dark thick-tongued ruminant
massive beast
of crowded herds–
his solitary ruins
to this narrowland
still brown body
in still and dry heat
as though suspended

The scene should be framed and hung on walls as

is, as
from anywhere
in these hills–
highpitch of air punctured–
a single shot

in perfect flight through
will pierce fur
thick flesh and he too
will fall

another small
soon
indistinct
dark decomposing
heap
as ancient and pointless
as the rest

DOUGLAS BARBOUR

THREE POEMS

BREATH GHAZAL 47:

leaves fall
in noted beneficence

wind takes them fresh
laden cool in lungs too

effff ffffmm over & over
transforming hue & you

move too these days
thru a maze of colours fallen

beneath our feet
crunch yytwheesh whioosh where

BREATH GHAZAL 56:

a:

at that precise instant watching i draw
out of synch with them in aahh

across behind & thru the net of winter branches
brownian movement of waxwings

irregulars in this flypast
a precision lost in dissolution an ordered

disorder ? so fast & dis
continuous their flight yet the sky

between their waving lines appeared
a kind of pattern almost in the blink of an eye

b:

how at that precise instant indrawn
out of synch with them aahhh

allatonce across behind & thru the net of winter branches
brownian movement of wings & bodies

write that wave \|/\|/ sine how
many numbers weave never known

for sure the waxwings there a flow
wings stuttering so fast they touch

neither branches nor each other
winging suddenly absent in a sweep of gesture of

banners in the wind 'flif flif'
whos holding breath silent watching them disappear

'TURNING BACK: A PASTORAL'

That is a philosophical notion &
the only way to get there is via the
Theocritan backlanes of the mind. I drove a
ute (but we dont say that in Canada) my first time, or
has my memory as usual
been turned around. A youngster well-
versed in sexual fantasy I saw the event-horizon already

in the white bodies gleaming in a backlane
country night. Intent on
things beyond my experience it
seems I gazed down & imprinted the
obvious image on my brain forever as
the truck swept past & even the
velour of the seat back felt extreme.

On that night I thought for
the first time I knew what I had seen beyond the
dashboard light: those anonymous
crazy lovers were my teenage image of pastoral glory
with the moonlit passion I imagined
fresh as a film I might never see & all in plein
air. The nostalgic breeze is always

rushing past the open window
through which I had seen
the act my brother driving hadnt.
Doorless are the pathways to the
cabin we might come to in
the gentle night of the poem, where no one's
cursed & the wide blue shining

skies are always sunny although
blackened with clouds glimpsed suddenly
by flashes of lightning only at
night when rain should (& does) fall.
Though to get to those special places now you'd have to adopt
a highway. You pay (not pave) your way to paradise where a
moon is always full & the stalker never
lurks in shadow to pounce. Is this not so?

Somewhere else it may be so
and we have to believe it: that
the green continues to grow even as the
spotlight of industrial colonization brightens,
cutting to the charred bone, trees going
through new contortions just to wave above the highways.

The sense of a common past's both lost & found in
burn-back as if the argument
of trees carried on across all
summer, & who then
detects a functional myth for tourism and bathing in
the blackened ash where even the sudden
jerks of light impressionism brings can speak only

of the desired realm (unfound). In the city somewhere
nerves are bad to-night
and a whole civilization dies in a
tissue of lies on tv insistent that
the virtual pastoral is sufficient unto itself alone. Like
rabbits all voting for the same party we want to keep others
out of our intentional dreams,
to somehow turn the thin skin of civitas one colour again.
Chew on that & tell me

the world is safe from such predators. Somewhere even now
burnt flesh is the sacrifice that
prongs god awake again. For what. Is that the only tale
of the tribe we can tell. In the ashy
stubble such fire leaves we might discover
the remnants of salty dreams,
halogen's broken harvest.

Conflagration burns away memory:
filling the mind with flame, scorching
the pastoral dream to degree zero. On
omni-screens everywhere the only fields

within sight are parking lots,
their harvest gets us where our
eyeballs point & nowhere does the gleam of
the green register as more than a
crack in the pavement. Between nature
and the tourists the
whine of harddrives crashing replaces the dream

of artists seeking to define
a way of life. It's a
triple palimpsest at least, way beyond the
two borders we once crossed awake & dreaming &
mocks any desire we might still feel for
its long lost
rituals of accommodation, acceptance,
a way of informing the mind, a
sign that the path still led to a forest spring

of love & immersion in the always
fading forest of innocence. Not
influence, not investment
in those open spaces of

a bargain, but we never knew that or we forgot. Beyond that
field is another, then another, & a wood
where to name the landscape so you can make it exist demands
gravity of purpose also lost. It

is therefore impossible for even
a citizen of such desire to avoid the bottle-
neck of enterprise, the final
chop of that final tree,
and get back to
the country in any
poem or song that
is not (on cd) already so
framed & so defined
by the torque of nostalgia.
Levity seems the only way out – but lacks grace.

[Word/line acrostic of John Kinsella's
'The Rabbiters: A Pastoral'
from *The Hunt & other poems*]

ROBIN BLASER

TWO POEMS

that cat,

one of the wonders of the intelligent universe—cranky, manipulative, a touch affectionate, like everybody else—round gold eyes stare up at our second-story window, apparently thinking over Haydn's joke pouring out of it—musical humour in the twilight air, but the plywood barricade, put up to protect the wet-painted, red steps, troubles her mindfulness—thus, in no time, Haydn hears inquiring mews at the door with painted paws—vulnerable broken continuities laughing at the only entrance to, the only exit from this floor—discomposed, disconsolate on both sides—musically noted, I suppose

the bottom line

God's my life, stolen hence, and left me asleep!
I have had a most rare vision. I had a dream,
past the wit of man to say what dream it was.
Man is but an ass, if he go about to expound
this dream. Methought I was—there is no man
can tell what. Methought I was—and methought
I had—but man is but a patched fool, if
he will offer to say what methought I had.
The eye of man hath not heard, the ear of
man hath not seen, man's hand is not able
to taste, his tongue to conceive, nor his heart

to report, what my dream was. I will get
Peter Quince to write a ballad of this dream.
It shall be called Bottom's Dream, because
it hath no bottom—

there's a turn of my mind
that is intolerable
and happiness,
pungent as Cuban oregano
on the window sill
there's a smart to it, not entirely
intelligent
as if going through Preboreal
willow arches
before the sands start,
as if this old man sat on an embankment
drying his clothes,
having washed them fiercely
in the water flows—
one or the other of his eyes meet
a philosophy of *as if*
without its idealism—
the ribs of his washboard
worn to a flat surface, his clothes
threads of a web of connections,
desirous separates,
the measureless complexity
of everyone's dream
which hath no bottom

for Phyllis Webb

CHRISTIAN BÖK

EIGHT POEMS

VOWELS

loveless vessels
we vow
solo love

we see
love solve loss
else we see
love sow woe

selves we woo
we lose

losses we levee
we owe

we sell
loose vows
so we love
less well

so low
so level
wolves evolve

from *CHAPTER A*

(for Hans Arp)

Awkward grammar appals a craftsman. A Dada bard damns stagnant art and scrawls an alpha, a small ankh that can stamp a blatant hallmark and spawn a madcap anagram. A daft vandal has drawn a slapdash paraph (an arc, slant, and zag) that warps all stanzas, all ballads: what a prank, what a scandal. A flaw, a gaff, as flagrant as an aardvark at a gala ball, mars all paragraphs, all almanacs. A scar, a mark, that can crack a mandala, warrants a grand drama, a black psalm. A dark cassandra chants abracadabra as a mantra and warns that what harms a law can attract bad karma. A cataclasm starts at dawn as a star falls.

Naphtha gaslamps cast a warm charm. A fat maharajah basks at a spa, at a bar, that has swank, that has class. A vassal at hand can grant a pashakhan all palatal manna that a man can want: jam tarts and armagnac, bran flans and schnapps. A dwarf, a thrall, can draw a man's bath, wash a man's back, as spartan lads fawn and hang, athwart an altar, amaranth garlands as fragrant as attar —a balm that calms all angst. A shah can catch an act at a danza, watch pagan gals can-can and cha-cha, catcall a jazzband that scats a waltz and a samba. A sax drawls tantaras; maracas rasp cantatas. A lass as sad as a swan twangs a glass harp.

from *CHAPTER E*

(for René Crevel)

Western men revere the Greek legends. We retell them. We remember the blessèd deeds—the represented scenes where hellbent defenders seek revenge when Helen weeps. We see her helplessness, her defenselessness, when she beseeches, even begs, her redeemers: *set me free.* Her henchmen bleed when fencers enter the melee—the steel trenches, where épées, flechettes, even skewers, rend men's thews, then shred men's flesh. The helmsmen steer sleek vessels between the sheltered clefts where tempests wreck the fleet—the helms, the keels, even the nets, reft, then rent, when the elements beset the crew.

Resplendent, the bejewelled empress feels restless, sleepless—hence, she deserts her fleece bed. She neglects her tenderest gentlemen, even when her *serventes* tell her these sweet verses, these tender excerpts. Her restlessness, her sleeplessness, vexes her. She frets. She lets her dependent serfs preen her tresses, then feed her excellent refreshments: seltzers, cheeses, desserts—even *creme de menthe* sherbet. She feels depressed, even when her beekeepers fetch her preserved sweets. She feels wretched, even when her jewellers fetch her bevelled jewels. The green gems, *les gemmes vertes,* bedeck her velvet flesh.

from *CHAPTER I*

(for Dick Higgins)

Writing is inhibiting. Sighing, I sit, scribbling in ink this pidgin script. I sing with nihilistic witticism, disciplining thin signs with trifling gimmicks—impish hijinks which highlight stick-sigils. Isn't it chic? Isn't it hip? I fit childish insights within rigid limits, writing shtick which might instill priggish misgivings in critics blind with hindsight. I dismiss nitpicking criticism which flirts with philistinism. I bitch; I kibitz—griping whilst criticizing dimwits, sniping whilst indicting nitwits, dismissing insipid thinking, in which wit is still illicit.

Hiking in British districts, I picnic in virgin firths, climbing twilit hills, grinning in bliss with misfit whims, smiling if I find birch twigs, smirking if I find mint sprigs. Midspring brings with it singing birds, six kinds (finch, siskin, ibis, tit, pipit, swift), whistling shrill chirps, trilling chirr chirr in high pitch. Kingbirds flit in gliding flight, skimming limpid springs, dipping wingtips in rills which brim with living things: krill, shrimp, brill—wild fish with gilt fins, which swim in flitting zigs. Brisk winds swirl Irish mist. Its wispish frills drift in mizzling twilight. I think: ***night is nigh.***

from *CHAPTER O*

(for Yoko Ono)

Loops, hoops, or whorls form lots of fonts to jot down words for books. Books form mothproof cocoons—tombs to hold bookworms. Profs or doctors from Oxford schools go to London bookshops to shop for topnotch goods: schoolbooks on how to gloss works of Dr. Johnson or Wordsworth; workbooks on how to boost longshot growth of stocks or bonds; cookbooks on how to cook borscht from Stockholm or wonton from Hong Kong. Logos on colophons show off oblong knots of gold on rococo scrolls of worn morocco. Folks who own old bookrooms look to good books, not to post-mod post-docs, for comfort from gloom or sorrow.

Book of Job, Book of Mormon—both show orthodox monks how God confronts Moloch. Storms of horror, floods of scorn, swoop down on Sodom to mow down non-Mormon townsfolk: crowds of Mongols who bow to no lord; throngs of Ostrogoths who kowtow to no god. Blood drowns cohorts who honor no cross of doom nor crown of thorns. Crooks shoot folks; goons rob condos. Mobs knock down doors, storm control-rooms. Bronx cops do crowd-control. Troops cordon off two blocks of shops to look for kooks who throw Molotov bombs to bomb pollbooths or tollbooths: *pow pow, boom!* No Song of Solomon conforms to crossword protocols.

VOILE

(for Arthur Rimbaud)

Anywhere near blank rage
you veer, oblivial.

Jade array, calico azure
evanescent talents.

Unaware, corrosives flow
to my shackled hand.

Key bombing an auto tour
to paint her colour.

Gulfs of amber contours
evaporate the tint.

Linseed glass or oblong
freezing dumbbells.

Upper pressing cashiers
do deliver verbals.

Dance the clear, elusive
rinse of paintings.

Icicle fibre meant divine
daymares varied.

Pity paid to see my dynamo
poised to rid us.

Cool chimes, a primal green
for studios.

Spur my clear plan astride
a stranger.

Cylinders versus diamonds
a decision.

Hollow, my gray ovule does
decide you.

W

(A User's Manual)
for Georges Perec

"To the V that stands for viewing what
is all around us, eyes turned outward,
toward the conscious surface of things,
surrealism has relentlessly opposed W"
—André Breton.

"A meaningless distinction on W-leads
to automatic disqualification"
-Georges Perec.

It is the V you double, not the U, as if to use
two valleys in a valise is to savvy the vacuum
of a vowel when at a powwow in between sawteeth.

It is to ask the painter of a watercolour hue:
"Why owe you twice what a sheep is or a tree,
if the fee you double has to hew you a puzzle?"

An enigma, like a game in E, its jigsaw zigzag
never fits the excess void left behind by X,
the reason for the why on the way to what is said.

If you glean an anagram from each angle, do you
dabble with your double view of what you hate:
a swastika that awaits your olympiad of riddles?

Is this letter a residuum of what troubles you?
If you slice it down the middle, does it not
hereafter indicate a twofold victory over life?

In the world of madness where you use a yo-yo,
why oh, why oh, must you find four palm trees
in a park, if not to make of them your symbol?

It is the name for an X, whose V does not view
the surface of a lake, but the mirror on a wall,
where U and you become a tautonym, a continuum.

AND SOMETIMES

syzygy pyx
gyp
gypsy
pygmy gyms

jynx synch
try
psych
tryst ptyx

spy glyphs
lysyl
brr
grr glycyl

sylphs fly
flyby
sky
by tsk tsk

nym nymphs
why
wyrms
hmm my zzz

sty styryl
fry
fyrds
lymph cyst

wyrds wych
lynch
wry
mythy lynx

cry by nth
cwm
crwth
crypt styx

myst wynds
dry
dryly
shy by shh

myth hymns
thy
myrrh
my rhythms

BEV BRAUNE

READING POST-MODERNIST RUNES IN *SKULVÁÐI ÚLFR*: A JOURNEY OF PUZZLES[1]

Abstract

In composing the 16th century translation of Skulváði Úlfr, *I was driven primarily by the line-of-ear of Old Norse alliterative staves, Cherokee syllabary and gaps in Caribbean-Arawakan history. It is, however, through complementary acts of effective lines-of-sight that the poem is ultimately held together to create a 'genuine forgery' using five types of reading from the concepts of word-images and gaps that explore the forg(er)ing of readership, poetry and Roman Ingarden's puzzlement regarding the fundamental nature of the object stratum in a literary work of art. This paper looks at one of these types of reading: the script or 'actual object' type of reading as explored in* Skulváði Úlfr. *It may be the crux on which Roman Ingarden's puzzlement hangs: "In connection with their timelessness, ideal objects are not subject to change, though it is thus far not clear what the basis of their immutability is."*[2]

Skulváði Úlfr took on a life of its own as a late 16th century 'forgery' of an English translation of an epic 'Viking poem' based on strange relationships that came to dominate its composition and the focus of theoretical inquiry concerning how we compose and read poetry. The epic is set in motion by the voice of eleventh century Norwegian jarlskald, Dagazar Kerrigansson, in search of the unconquered land called Vinland in order to re-establish the power of his family name lost under the heavy-handed rule of Norwegian King Harald Finehair. His journey with 1200 other Vikings takes the story from 'ice' to 'fire,' into the southern hemisphere and into remarkable hidden territories of Cherokee and Arawakan history.

When the epic was completed, it occurred to me that the 'translation' was clearly a *fiction* while the 'actual objects' referred to in it remained *quite real*. It occurred to me that the difference in construction between those two *texts* is the *argument* on which they are hinged, namely, to embrace Roman Ingarden's puzzlement regarding

the nature of the *object stratum* in the literary work of art—that objects on which the 'existence' of a literary work hangs act *as if* they are 'objects in the actual world' while remaining unchangeable, yet in contradiction of our experience of objects in the actual world which are constantly subject to change and incompleteness.

Some of the considerations I have tried to confront with regard to aspects of reading a poem are probably not as elaborate as Wolfgang Iser's algebraic notations on reading the narrative of a novel, but they may be equally as strange. In this respect, it could be useful to think of the reading of the 'actual objects' in *Skulváði Úlfr* somewhat like Richard Wollheim trying to rationalize the concept of drawing pictures. Although we are convinced that we need our eyes to draw pictures and to read them, we suspect that there is more than accurate physical vision that brings a picture alive, that allows us to *read* them.[3]

In composing the translation of *Skulváði Úlfr* as a Viking poem, I was driven primarily by the line-of-ear of alliterative staves, the stanzaic constructions providing patterns—aural and visual—all of their own through skáldic and Eddic styles. It was, however, through complementary acts of effective lines-of-sight that the poem seemed ultimately held together to create a " 'genuine' forgery" (as Welsh Poet Gwyneth Lewis described the poem recently).[4]

Skulváði Úlfr employs five types of illustrations or, more accurately, five types of reading. The whole text—word-images and sound-images-as-words—evolved as a language map that narrates the real evidence of my exploration of the terrain of the poetic imagination and the troublesome nature of rulership over that territory, the manner in which the images and sounds found there behave. One set of images, from over 50 individual images used in the poem, is used to explore one possible type of reading that sheds some light on "the basis of their immutability" as "ideal objects" in a literary work of art. This is the *script or 'actual object' type of reading*, and is linked within the fiction of the poem to the concept of runic signs and shield images in Old Norse poetry.

Hidden by caves of meaning, runes used by the Vikings remain the subject of fascination.[5] Whether or not they developed from borrowed scripts of Latin, Greek or Northern Italic origin or were first written by the Goths (prior to first century AD), speculation continues about their meanings.[6] It is in making the most of the hidden element of Viking runes that I bring to *Skulváði Úlfr* a way to express the relationships of gap-lines and 'secret' aspects of the construction of the poem and the reading of it. I try to take on board the significance of the associated word-suffix from the Old Norse: *-rúna* meaning "whisperer."[7]

In relating Old Norse runic inscriptions to the original illustrations of *Skulváði Úlfr*, it was a matter of seeing which of my intuitive images, clearly and without contrivance, could be considered part of the runic tradition of the Viking-influenced Kerrigash. Beneath the variety and complexity of images that are treated as part of the original script of the Kerrigash are three basic signs from the Elder Futhark of common Germanic runes and which continued, though altered in varying degrees, in the Swedish-Norwegian script and Hälsinge script.

The three signs are: Nauðr (Old English–Nyð) equivalent of the Modern English "N", Hágl or Hagall (Old English–Hægl), "H", and Tyr (Old English–Tiw), "T'. They occur in the poem as 'evidence' of images from shields (three shown below) from the armory of Kerrigan Iron Hand, king of Kerrigarðr in the mid- to late-15th century and Skulváði's predecessor.

From left, the first illustrates Nauðr, signifying need or necessity, restriction, constraint; the second, Hágl, the seemingly destructive working towards transformation, the "layered nature of hailstone"; and the third, Tyr, the focus of the mental warrior, judgement, glory, the god of war Tyr.[8] These three signs became the focus of establishing common signs, available to everyone inside and outside the poem, so to speak. They work in the poem as common ground to read the essential characterization and vision of the main characters, as well as provide links with uncommon signs in the poem and to a possible legend for the reading of the poem.

Nauðr was *read* compositionally as the unmistakable marking from an image used to construct Kerrigansson's character in preparation for his *naming* Kerrigarðr and the setting up of its laws–his reading of 'foreign landscapes,' not unlike the way we go about reading a poem. The initial act begins with *constraint*. The second main level of that act is *disruption/transformation* or that of the nature of Hágl. Hágl was determined from the recurring intuitive images of ladders and 'going to ground'–ladders formed, we might say, from connecting signs of both or multiples of either Nauðr and Hágl–constraint and disruption–to create a ladder. This illustrates ways we go about reading *beneath* the words of the *text*. In this case, it matters little whether or not the words

are readable in terms of our literacy in comprehending their characters. The form of Tyr which was used is based on the reverse picture of an intuitive image that resembles one of the pre-runic symbols for Tyr, a northward-pointing, double-headed arrow. Tyr is therefore shown here in its Etruscan version with the double-headed arrow, but crowned by a moon or disc (recurring images that can be found in Books Two and Three of the poem). Tyr and its circular associations in the epic focus on how we move through 'new ground' ***beneath texts***, how we maneuver 'unfamiliar territories of these ***texts***.'

In ***Skulváði Úlfr*** images of these 'actual-object' ***texts*** occur within the narrative/fiction as rubbings from gravestones and as actual scripts or illustrations copied from the journals of the Kerrigash authors. In many instances, the word-image ***texts*** remain in the margins only, yet they appear to exist surely as part of the ***text*** even though the text/body of the 'translated poem' does not refer to them. The translator, Gwen Terrane, directs us, from the margins of the poem, to these facsimiles of images, on the basis of her translation of the original text (which is unavailable to us). For example, the pair of word-images shown below are recorded in Book Four of the epic with the following annotation by Terrane: "tattoos worn by Skulváði on her back ***(left)*** and on her front torso ***(right)***: as provided by Almordozar" (one of Terrane's ***informants***). Our only link between the images and the 'translated words' is Terrane's direction, again in the margins, to these lines in the poem: '***He*** [Kerrigan Iron Hand] ***called out to hear // the crimson voice raised / from the gold-lips and skin-coat of train-rings***" which she annotates as: "gold-lips and skin-coat of train-rings—Skulvádi Úlfr's pollen-dusted lips and tattooed body ***(see illustrations of her tattoos below).***"

Each 'actual object' ***carving*** is revealed to readers as a fragment, encouraging us to participate in the nature of the characters' and translator's lines of vision. At first I felt that these ***objects*** would undoubtedly affect ***our*** reading of the poem as well. But to what extent would they affect us? To what end would they impact on ***our*** reading of the words? Terrane's voice, through her margin annotations, shows

connections between the 'translation' and the evidence of original *texts as actual objects*, but she does not do this consistently. As well, this translation of an 'obscure Norse language' that she reports to be the language of the 'original document' remains a *secret language* throughout the seven Books of the *Skulváði Úlfr*. The *tone* of her *translation* borders on the esoteric, while the *grammar of the words* creates a lucid narrative.

The images are paradoxical in every respect: clear yet complex, closest to the surface of the poem yet coming from the deepest level of the work as an *original text*. They are the most mobile, yet the most fixed. They suggest a 4-dimensional status (if we include the possible magical element as a 4th dimension, perhaps) yet they are 2-dimensional line drawings.

We may increase the images in size to understand their detail while we cannot do this with the narrative translation in order to read a deeper understanding of the words. The images as such are written on the physical body of the text. They participate in a kind of strip tease where, as lines of poetry are read, the images are revealed, but not necessarily vice versa. In either case, the image-impact remains the same while the words continue to confound, remain hidden. The images stop us in our tracks, leave us open-mouthed. They do not invite visual tricks nor offer illusions to allow us to find them more meaningful than they are from their appearance. If the essence of the *Skulváði Úlfr* can be measured, these word-images may come closest to it.

Once drawn I could not, and still cannot, change them. Perhaps this may provide another clue to their immutability as literary *objects*. They found completion far more quickly and easily than the words of the poem that continue to slip and elude accuracy. And yet the arcane quality of the images creates a mystery around the poem that *dates* it in a *real* way that the fictional reality does not, though the fictional-aspect is 'older' while the images are 'contemporary' (both *within* the fiction and *without* it).

"The Heart of the Book" from Book Five provides one of the simplest word-images and some of the most complex sound-images-as-words. The sound-images-as-words even at their clearest appear to confound. However, it seems to me that the *image-text* **is always** accessible, if painfully so because there is no recourse to sharing the *experience* of them with another reader except to say "Look at this." They remain the most private aspects of the work in any attempt to *read* it either as composer or as an Ingardean observer.

Kerrigash runes impose an architecture of form that challenges the eye by their simplicity. They impose a structure that challenges our expectation of how to arrive from one edge of the *text* to the other.

They are a set of signs that constantly defy attention, yet demand attentiveness, a kind of uneasy vigilance, precisely *because* they remain uninterpretable—can only be observed as themselves. Perhaps it is "uneasy vigilance" that *maintains the object stratum* in its immutable state. Are we mesmerized by the clarity of its edges? The heart/emotion of the experience is open, that is, allows gaps to us for interpretation where mobility and expansion are possible but not enlightening. The immutability of images conjured in a literary work may lie in the nature of the image and our *regard* for it: the act of *looking at it* rather than the possible multitude of our responses. Our attentiveness fixes the images while affording us ways to simulate them in a series of fixed states in order to create continuous consecutive (moving) images or keep them fixed just as we choose and as long as we choose to bring the work to a reality that we can understand. As we read we invariably ***annotate the text*** regardless of the *shape* of that text; we provide our own *companion reader/translator.* Perhaps this is what we aim to analyse when we pursue the machinations of *hyper-text*—the proper domain of *hypertext* being that of the reader. The role of *hypertext* (as an electronic medium) successfully functions best, it seems, for the observer-reader and not the composer save where the composer assumes the role of observer-reader.

It seems to me that *line-of-sight* markings in *Skulváði Úlfr* cannot be 'mis-read' no matter how difficult the ways to comprehending them may *appear* to be a requirement for *seeing* them because the markings always appear *as themselves* while the 'English translation' keeps the *whole body* of the 'original written text' hidden.

From The Journey Of Puzzles, Skulváði Úlfr , Book Five, Part 2

The Heart of the Book

King Kerrigan Iron Hand searches for ways to read the books written by Skulváði Úlfr:

Skulváði's sheets sang sweet brilliance
pulling Heiðr's law to pad her pillows.
My death cushioned by The Wolf's glamour
preferred such darkness with perfect pleasure.

(Heiðr's law—immortality or indestructibility; Heiðr or Gullveigr (Gold or Seduction) was the giant (Wanir) whom could not be destroyed by the Æsir.
The Wolf's glamour—Skulvaði's seductiveness; also a reference to Wolffem magic associated with Wolffem use of an hallu-cinogenic golden pollen.)

And yet I betrayed this sinking blame
upon her book which shone with gold
circling its covers, pressed open-lipped,
marked with blossoms where she stopped to rest.

Its turned pages tuned with beaten gold
were tree-gum bound. From the secret hand
that clenched its covers and dust-dyed leaves
trailed a hold of runes to the book's heart.

(A hold of runes—a treasure of scripts (runic markings).)

Within its pages, it spoke of ways
in shapes and maps hidden from the clans —
another scheme The Maid denied me
with her wolfish guile to haunt my game.

With Huldra's gift I gained new art —
gilded deceits, new devices —
to ride The Wolf's trail; her careful pages
so ringed with oils of her sleep and rise.

(Huldra's gift—a song from the forest goddess, protector of domesticated animals, gifted with a beautiful singing voice; i.e. Kerrigan treats the discovery of Skulváði's Book as the gift of a new method from the forest goddess to find Skulváði.)

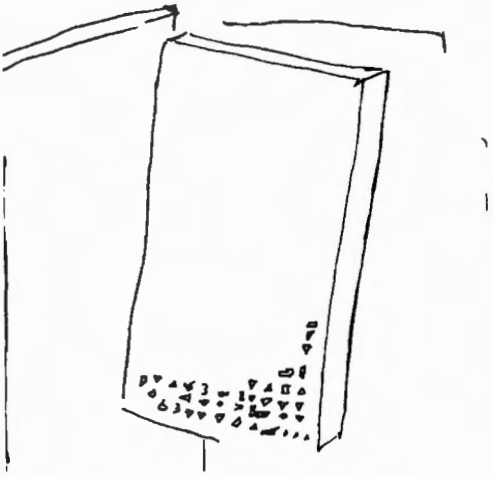
But I dared not let the lie ride me.
I meant to use it on our Council,
her pressing scents held to my breast,
fitted with secrets— with Gíld-rac girthed.

Hitsko's wedding still held Kerrigash,
riding their minds in high spirits.
Any strange call that I issued now
would swing on feasts, sail on sumbl laws.

(Sumbl laws—the law that a feast which antecedes another, held within the same season, extends the antecedent celebration into the second, so creating one long celebration.)

The book would track my path to the east,
to forests and sea and to the power
that called The Wolf closer to mounts
and beasts promising paths to Gíld-rac.

With The Wolf's book horns would pass again,
brimming mead would flow, bridling victories –
all Kerrigarðr eager to claim
the joy of weddings with feasts for war.



Above–sketch of the marked leaves of Skulváði's book found among Kerrigan's poems; the illustration shows that her book was incomplete. More importantly, it shows that the Kerrigash probably wrote from the lower half to the top half of the page. Another explanation could be that the book was left with deliberate empty spaces to be filled later, indicating gaps in the records of Skulváði's puzzles at reading the landscapes she explored.

NOTES

1. This is from a paper delivered at the Faculty of Creative Arts Research Conference, University of Wollongong, Australia on 11 September 1998.
2. Roman Ingarden, *The Literary Work of Art*, trans. George G. Grabowicz (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973) 10.
3. Richard Wollheim, "On Drawing an Object," *Aesthetics* ed. Harold Osborne, Oxford Readings in Philosophy, ser. ed. G. J. Warnock (London: Oxford University Press, 1972) 121-44.
4. I read with Gwyneth Lewis at the 1998 Sydney Writers' Festival Varuna Luncheons for International Poets at Varuna Writers' Retreat, Katoomba, Australia on 10th May 1998.

5. "By the beginning of the Viking Age the Scandinavian rune-masters had developed an alphabet quite distinct from those of other Germanic peoples, such as the Anglo-Saxons, the Frisians and the Continental Germans. It had sixteen letters, and from them the values of its first six characters is called the ***futhark*** [f(f) u(u)þ(t)h(h) a(a)r(r) k(k)]. Even within Scandinavia there was no standard from of the letters, and the different inscriptions vary a good deal. The Vikings used two main types of runes, with numbers of lesser or local variants. One type is called the Common or Danish ***futhark*** (although it also occurs outside Denmark), and the other is the short-twig or Swedo-Norwegian ***futhark*** (although again it is not confined to those countries." Graham-Campbell, 156.
6. Regarding the invention of runic characters: "It was several centuries before the Viking period and probably somewhere near the Roman Empire, since many of the letters of the early inscriptions resemble those of the Roman alphabet; although, because they were developed for cutting on wood, they have their own characteristic shapes." Graham-Campbell, 156.
7. "**-rúna** f. *whisperer*, see **eyra-rúna**." "**rúnar** f. pl. 1. *secrets.*" Beatrice La Farge and John Tucker, *Glossary to the Poetic Edda*: based on Hans Kuhn's "Kurzes Wörterbuch," Skandinavistische Arbeiten; Bd. 15 (Heidelberg: Winter, 1992) 218.
8. Susan Granquist, "Runes of the Elder Futhark" 1994, citing Edred Thorssons *Futhark, At the Well of Wyrd,* and *Runelore*, Internet. http://www.tu-chemnitz.de/~mabo/runes.html.

COLIN BROWNE

from AS IF

(for my grandfather)

The singing in opera takes place between worlds: Such a view will take singing, I guess above all the aria, to express the sense of being pressed or stretched between worlds, one in which to be seen, the roughly familiar world of the philosophers, and one from which to be heard, one to which one releases or abandons one's spirit and which recedes when the breath of the song ends.

—Stanley Cavell, "Opera and the Lease of Voice"

LENS

It is as if she is on a boat and the boat is ceaseless longing
and her longing is greasewood
& rock rose
and rattlesnake

It is as if she is insinuated into a collaboration with Pud in the
Double Bubble comic strip to calibrate lexical flexibility,
as if Abel is treating Cain to a *George of the Jungle* matinée,
as if her grandfather had not at the last minute with the trunks
packed & stickers on cancelled their reservations,

and the drowned body of a girl is rising as in a film projected
backwards up onto the bridge canopy intact and grinning as if
what we see
were the battered hull of her desire arcing in mechanical sage

ARRAS

Age spikes dick. On this rotates a culture more lucid and virulent than Dave Butcher—dispatching his finger into the evanescent air outside the Odeon Armdale—could in his most lurid dreams have wrassled into the mind we

shared with the lyrics from "At the Hop". The great uncles' shrug was no shrug. No doubt prototypes were whittled and essayed. In common with a good gutting-knife a blood runnel was inscribed into each son of Bayonne.

How many cartridges can a man cram into his magazine? Bolting forward and slashing—or repelling from the rear—a man's progress justified the foundry expenses. The great uncles, stooped, fags in hand, a fifth of Johnnie Walker

in the shed—silhouetted or in dungarees—sole-deep in sawdust stacking cottonwood in the late sun on a useless patch of paradise thousands of useless miles from what elegy smudges: the unspeakable, or was it the

incomprehensible, or what would make you long to be a stiff at nineteen? Excess of cruelty? Lunatic martyrdom? Forbidden caresses? A repressed and since obliterated collectivity? Which is not to say dick's acme but the spell-

binding hallucination of being swept up by the angel with the young private in her arms Susanna gazed at outside the train

station, losing consciousness to the awful beating of wings. Self-loathing, ravishing bliss: to wish what one

loves more than anything extinguished, surrendering even boyhood's ecstatic fusions. The incomprehensible, he said, is living on when the best have gone. It is a sin of predation. The speakable being the case for ending it oneself,

with a bullet or a pill like a gentleman; the unspeakable: one's failure to carry it off, or to courageously love oneself and one's brother enough to honour either. This (shame) he dug from his gut like a corroded Bronze Age toy,

an ox or ewe, and brought home shivering in a box tucked in the dresser until his skin dried like mucilage. The real tooth was the hollowed-out imitation with the drop of desiccated arsenic he secreted among his collars.

And the second question: How does a man come to assume that there are rational beings like himself apart from himself? And how does he come to recognize them, since they are certainly not immediately present to his pure self-consciousness?

—Johann Gottlieb Fichte,
Some Lectures Concerning the Scholar's Vocation.

AVION

In the documentary glade rosehips shine. Dogs frisk. Twigs sport golden tongues. I once saw a salmon leap near here. Silver drips pearled the sea. What can I offer you? I am sitting on a stump and squatting behind

a counter and standing on a curb in my new shirt and it's not all it is cracked up to be. I am one who believed he was fluent on this subject and now find my self, if that is what I should call it, buggered in the tongue. The eagles tour

above us with their murderous babies. The sky resembles as usual a vast ocean lit up with luminous flying fishes each of whom has learned to pronounce a syllable of an otherworldly substitution but for the first time I can't hear

their analogous finny whispers. In coming here I'd expected to present to the camera a mouth redder and I'd hoped sweeter than rosehips and a song ascending like an eagle's ichor at the glint of a vole's eye. Greet a prop on a

stump battered by twist-ties in a documentary glade overwhelmed by the properly passionate ululation of the leaves' uliginose forays into *Wissenschaftslehre* and the sole's battle as it whacks its pitiful tail against

the hull. Who am I? Fichte's dunce? One lost to himself *"as a result of protracted spiritual servitude"*? The red-winged blackbirds are so tame this morning you'd swear on a seal's nose to magnetic interference. One without

conviction, without belief in the conviction of others? My granddad could pick out on a bruised map why we're here. He never gave a thought to how, or so we proclaim, to insulate ourselves from what he did think because he did

and he knew why. A sleeping dog spills on no moss. They are collecting room tone. This next part is silent thinking. (I am

thinking the map is bruised because he bruised it. He did climb hills and find white heather.) Isn't that

the name of an outboard engine: "*spiritual servitude*"? I'll swear that's a church bell. Isn't that a man burning? *"...people of this sort,"* says Fichte, *"will be unable to see anything beyond the mere letters, inasmuch as what*

passes for spirit in their case will be yanked back and forth by the secret fury pent up within them." I am determined to be gracious. Simple as this hill is then, it will deceive. An alder bobs with nascent insolence in the prop-wash

but at this stage our customs are safe according to the authorities. Shrewdly designed to be authoritative, these cardigans are being imported worldwide assuring us of beauty in function and security wherever men are burned. But

why those enormous letters in the sky behind the Belted Kingfisher? Surely they're a sign? The golden-crowned sparrow? A hawk? All is not perdu. If you are me I am your mouth, a poultice of passionate fascination.

SOMME

What does not bleed? Solvent. As she tells it, Joe McCulloch owned a shoe store in Strathclair, Manitoba. What age is light? A caress. He'd sit outdoors when it was fair and make smart comments when girls passed by. What year?

She left in '23. It was Hubert Morrison they steered clear of. Eighteen, nineteen, a big guy, he told the kids one afternoon he wanted their dog—a stray collie-cross—he was gonna grab it. Whenever they spotted him they'd

take off through the fields to the next farm, hearts pounding, to hide between the rows. What fear is this? That the heart's pouch of moxiebustion might not ignite. The incident occurred after she'd left town so she heard about it later.

It was Hallowe'en, with an apostrophe. Her father, on his own (their mother had died with the flu), never let them out on Hallowe'en. Strathclair was always rough, she said, on Hallowe'en. This was the year of *Spring and All,*

Williams frantic for a *"world detached from the necessity of recording it, sufficient to itself...,"* and drowning in his own cleverness. She is thirteen. How will I know love?

> *It is at the edge of the*
> *petal that love waits*
>
> *Crisp, worked to defeat*
> *laboredness—fragile*
> *plucked, moist, half-raised*
> *cold, precise, touching*
>
> *What*
>
> *The place between the petal's*
> *edge and the*

He's struggling here for *definition*, which for too long he's confused with representation. He jettisons the perps. He writes a sharp edge and a springing off into free air forever if you've got the guts. If he's to continue he's got no

choice. Same for Joe McCulloch. Seems that night Hubert Morrison and some friends thought it would be a lark to plug up Joe's chimney. The apostrophe is a cold night on the prairies. Hubert and a couple of chums crawl up onto Joe's

roof and in a jiffy the job is done. Before long Joe rushes out. He's mad. Smoke pours through the door. He shouts, "Get off of my

roof." He's got a gun. What? Hard to say: a .22, or a .303. Hubert laughs. Maybe gives Joe the finger.

It's Hallowe'en. Joe takes aim and brings him down. That's the end of Hubert Morrison. He doesn't figure any more. Strays rejoice! Says she wasn't there then, but when she was, when she passed Joe McCulloch on the street outside

his store and he muttered something she remembers trying to think the very best she could of him. He'd been brave over there she'd heard, so, well, you know, his wisecracks could be, well, be forgiven. D.W. Griffith, *"very*

disappointed with the reality of the battlefield," shot the trench scenes for *Hearts of the World* on Salisbury Plain. Joe McCulloch likely trained there. The location came in handy a year later as an influenza cemetery. Who is

writing this? A child of petals and shell-casings, an organism whose bliss surrenders to the epics unfurling in sound and light throughout his being. Griffith, gazing skyward in the publicity still, christened himself Gaston de Tolignac.

CLOVEN

As if by sheer effort a bay in a headland appears and the ship that enters it is your neck which more people than you can know would have if they thought no one was watching and as I say these words an orange and green pennant is

being hooked to a halyard and, yes, run up the mast and the breeze is stiff I can make out intermittently the rippling majuscules: N-O O-N-E I-S W-A-T-C-H-I-N-G and for the sake of propriety you take a hankie from your

sleeve and begin to dab at the open half of yourself which is professionally drained and freshly cauterized. Some fissures weep. You roll toilet paper into a carnation, tidy up the rough edges and feel a shape in your pocket:

the styptic pencil. May I report that his signet ring throbs? That the monogrammed shaving kit unzips to reveal a clandestine desert city, laid out, you realize, with its lids and boxes, its boulevards of scented leather,

the gleaming, vented *faux-ivoire* barrel of its toothbrush tube, as if to be an exemplary target, *un bijou*.? The ewe's ears flutter. Her people know this song. She lifts her head. This god, too, a codpiece

in the burning air; his names sparks she dodges, his throne her incinerator, her lamb his ossuary. Dawn bleats. You test your memory on a plate in the fridge as if from the night before. The smoke from the human bonfires

is black and oily. Some *"clawed their mouths ceaselessly." "Another sucked a rubber tube fastened to the gas-jet."** A mother on the northern border, in the town with the ice rink and Zamboni, has set herself on fire.

A crow jeers at a frozen puddle, and you step out into the glory

* Philip Gibbs, *Now It Can Be Told.* New York: Garden City Publishing Co. Ltd., 1920.

ALAN BRUNTON

WRITING OUT OF NOTHING

He arrives at the Island spread on a plank, then —Am I apart? wonders Mistah Onta as the armada floats away on pellucid waters, taking witnesses with it, and reciprocal voices. By what misunderstanding does he sprawl so giddily on this divot of Earth against which the wild surf bashes, dropped out of history into such a strange world, this circle so (de)finitely closed through which he drags himself like smoke? To what forever or to what end? Nothing else but the monologue?

Mistah Onta rights himself on the plage. He navigates by feathers, imperator in a swanskin of all that can be seen, Bona-parte as a private party where the life of the letter ends, Zee-land. For now, everything's local, natural and abundant in Ops, in a solitude with him, in the long grass of the astral plane.

He plots his return with the sense of wonder of starting over, conspiring with silence to reverse this exile from conversation, talking that's already fragmentary in his mind (half-remembered, but which half?) Destiny has made allowance for him to be here, a here so novel it's nowhere, a *Zee*-land that's New. Why would he ever back to his old class (why? unless to make a show-and-tell of himself and pretend this is he as really he is) when the sky
like this unloads its spectacular spill
with bloom and appeal
across boomers and swells
yes
you can tell
the picture is swell
and everything dooby-doo
on the Island, everyone as singular

as any souffle in his or her own way in an 'apartness'
that's neither death or afflatus and no one belongs to no one
alone.
The authentic language of Zeelanders is spoken when
nobody's here!

It's not unusual. Any one speaks more surely when the attractive other has gone or is lost in thought—that's why no one thinks on the Island: Life is too hot or cold, too un-2 or too happy. Mistah Onta could explain everything except he more and more suspects God is alongside in that exile, hiding out as dark and reserved as himself, as unnecessary, as much a feigned aside or make-believe, but something extra: an unstoppable something that never shuts up

THE UNSPEAKABLE HORROR OF IT!

Leaving strings, Mistah Onta sets out to survey the Island. He marks off boundaries by assembling signs. He makes himself at home in this Concession. He moos a hot vocal track into the subtropical night that echoes the future he's been lately seen in, a place where there's sense, his Island in time, eye of eternity, Eke of Zero, Pool of Synonyms!

Gaily almost, he dives into space not previously represented and seeks his ease there, in the endless possibility of hope, somewhere that's never not-been (not yet). That light-hearted flip plunges him right into the melo of language. His tongue hits the roof. Each word is a livid proof! Mistah Onta finds himself participating, tasting the desire to be in on the conversation, deeply in love, speaking of all that existence which might be anyone's dizzy presence on the edge of the world's seductive orifice, instantaneous or not at all, All-Star or Nothing, the subject of the nameless experience—like lovers when they bring themselves up from the Deep of the black lagoon and resume their skin, rising up on a good earth like mushrooms after rain,
or loop chasers
in what is
a little run-up
to Judgement-Day-oh-day-oh—

the squalid disappears, each thing's purpose 'under Heaven' is removed and Mistah Onta confronts his own possibility in the words of a plausible not-to-say reputable life. He laughs and lets himself fly away shapelessly from absolutes except absolute exposure, wanders, poses his 'muddy vesture' in places where he is nothing. Pretty vacant maybe but in wandering is hope, and calmness before What Comes (as it Becomes, the figment of any invagination—hope which is truly for the hopeless). With no regrets, he accepts each delay and gives it a name for the name of a thing is simply a thing that names.

He's back where he started, one example in an otherwise continuous line. The Island's been walked around. Its structure is complete but with everything standing up Mistah Onta runs out of gas. Today, he wants to be taken just as he is, drifting, pausing only to answer inquiries—is that the Casino? is the world is simply divine? eg; admiring the ornamental cherries that gush with Spring when

LO

& BEHOLD!

out of the gauze steps the Ineffable One, one hand at her swank neck (—divinely simple?) and invites him to sit beside the lagoon: sign of a sign, signette! la Signorina or Sis! everything so earthed! Naming would reveal her as the divinity in life but at what cost? The recognition of life's insurmountable profanity.

It's the thought that takes him away, to opacity and the practise of austerities. He prepares for any reality utterly Other to instantly disappear for if there is a revelation about which it is possible to be totally objective, that is verifiable, an event on his horizon, it surely recedes with the horizon itself. Only she can take him there, where everything is still to be spoken. She's okey-doke and fetching; they relate. He's doodaddy too, and alive, giddy just watching her eat, entranced by her exotic sub-lingual jets. Then she says: Can you afford to miss the greatest seminar of all time: the fires of god, the Giver and Taker? but

oh, the twister! her eyes, oh dear—they wander, she speaks forgetfully into limbo and contradicts what she's just said. Akarshini, how careless she seems but he staggers to his feet and follows her. Towards sunlight. It scalds his retinas. The sky is white, sub rosa, heavy methyl, like the mega-sky that announces the Day of Anger. God has spoken for once. There are no gaps left in this world, it is full.

Mistah Onta, held in suspension to her by a unique kindness, kindness he knows which is kindness she wants for herself, looks out as she bathes and tries on hair clips. He rubs himself with the dust from her feet, drinks her bath-water, the sky echoes with the opening of her lips

ahalya

oh land of fig
is this the end of the Summer Holiday
—wonderful vacation in the sun!
—when he ate her heart & she ate his?

Together they mount the ladder woven from silver and gold threads, threads of the lux of one life, she lifts him out of time and he goes up easy,
she's Bona-divina (tempera on panel)
brilliantest when slipping into another orbit

she is beautiful and she laughs!

Blessed Babe, Mother of What, Immortale, lulu of pearls ('this treasure of an oyster')
O doubled in oomph, eternity of m/f, of 'lips and eyes'—'reverence to Her!—amazement at those spontaneous gestures descends on Mistah Onta
who removes his mask and it's ME(! seeing things and being seen)
which must mean she is
Ineffable One oh YOU(! groovy 'Body Without Organs'):

photons flow in a numinosity I now foresee, minding you, minding me; language in suspense; no more words at all just tunes because what's left when you're here?

You are bread and wine
I eat and drink and
here we go
ex parte
sunlight bouncing off us now as we track the loop

Z

walking Time down burning sands into the sea

CLINT BURNHAM

TWO POEMS

Captain cock skews: Bulent Ark a Das likety split can landie
Gallant as a Ray in captaincy embroiled in, take in dash arcane samizdat licks
Fey Diane is ma Ma have a sin in cock eye E old dugs zoo new so oil lady
GvK cock Ma's Yo Nate him crueler nun deg is messy vey fatty Theramin
bastard technical direct Or O-lyric tack embassy in a gel merci look
how fair they are on the couch they've succeeded eel ya foot balk ular
err rescinded attaché burr hey you can in baa's lad dignitary
vG fad-y in yen knee Bert have a yak-a-lad E geni it Ettie
cap town boo seem Sari. cure mizzle silly taze after Laura's sampan yonder luck
serenity Yeah's at a cackle Renee id india he dare wreck gorgeous lure any soil
dial get dired bue scene Al-Anon foot beer cooler fey Yan I. How
comes i'll taste beer bash language yappy you're is hell
man yeah Dag key krumple eski- Nee you're no yeller 'kay nasty
Herc's barber in hangar 3 yeah i'll choke E.E. burr arcade dash licorice incendiary

BAD RAPE

well homied bipe hey honey edge
call peanut butter softening phone call
whose with drawl is this kick your ass
not vietnamese baby machine holding hand he smokes quick
saved off hockey stick under trimmed street tree
no people who call him charles these roses smell too much
like guest soaps
it's good to see pee-pull still doing this paranoid masochist
worthwhile, work's the drink of the cursing class
I'm an outboard word
bound'er to adults don't
com waves in the embassy
us seek council that fel
fella's
paintings point out of
windowless flintstone is're
dive bad rape silent 'C'
no cells in the cell! herd outrage

YVETTE CHRISTIANSË

SIGNS AND PORTENTS

from *Requiem for a Republic*

Thunder and trees moving in the promise of annunciations
they never taught us in our Dominican and Ursuline
catechisms.
The sky is full of prophecies—other Elijahs, Isaiahs, and
prophets who never
made it into the fold, saints who died quietly in the cells
of their most fervent beliefs, even in flight on broomsticks, or
in the
grip of an electric vision that shook their genitals free of

mortality. The sky is full of new epochs and the price is high
for anyone willing to speak of what they read. You read this
one
and it has shades of Joseph and sheaths of gold, not wheat,
and
that one has a black Madonna singing *mbathanga*, naked in
the nave of a
Cathedral as if she has always belonged there, exactly.
Doves of peace, tired of hovering for generations are sulking

and will not be tempted out, not even with the finest
sunflower
seeds, those that grow way out past Ermelo, on the way to
the
Swazi border, you know. It's up to the nuns and priests
to remind us of God's plan in this, it seems to have faded
so well into the distance. But, listen, I have just heard—

at least one tired pigeon, beak carbuncled from fast food
scraps

dropped in Oppenheimer Park—do you remember that
fountain
of Springboks, such art. . .—that pigeon, tired, eyes burning
like the embers of hell, has sung a sad song no one
understands.
People, even from Houghton and Parktown, Observatory and
Rosebank, are flocking to the Basuto blanket part of Jo'Burg
to find at least one last true sangoma who can explain

the smoke they feel rising from the backs of their eyelids.
Their money, so fat and heavy, has grown thin and men
with lazy eyes sit in the back of shops hung with drying skins
and leaves, things you wouldn't allow your children to play
with.
These men open their mouths. It is like a game of *fah-fee*—
"What have you
dreamt?"—and those slim women in their Audis

and black and white polka dot jump suits go "Hmph" and take
their car keys
straight home to ask their banker husbands instead, why,
why there are dark eyes burning fiercely in the grotto
where statues of placid Virgins once stood and smiled down
on
school girls in apricot? Is it, these thin women seem to ask,
the end of the world? Do they look at their husbands with this
sacrilege

in their eyes? Do they look out of their picture windows over
the valleys
on which they are perched, and see in the oil-black feathers
of the Ha-di-Da bird, full-scale disasters for their children—
Rorke's Drift, Isandlwana, Soweto spilling up the steps of the
Voortrekker Monument, into the leafless swimming pools?
Terror is a hungry mouth that eats truth now, in these closing
days.

GEORGE ELLIOTT CLARKE

FOUR POEMS

AUTUMNAL

October-brutal rain punishes leaves.
Their mute hurt imitates an infirm whore
Dashed by a stroke—palsied, silenced, a bard
Emptied of words, who can only gesture,
Miming loud pain.
We witness this torture,
But feel nothing, passionately nothing.
For poets cannot love, they only lie;
They love to lie with lovers, then lie fresh,
To prostitute their mornings to their nights,
To gouge out bitter, irritating lines,
Succulently truculent.
Penitent
Leaves litter the streets. Rain snarls in branches.
The sky slicks and glues itself to us—
Slushing our filthy, snowy rhetoric.

MILK

Milk of orange, peach, raspberry, rosewater—
Sunlight splashes the lashed Venetian blinds.

Garbage day is Thursday, not quite today.
There's time for letters and defecation,

Repair of deficits, undertaking
The milking of a poem. I think I am

A pagan suckered by a creed stillborn,
Obsessed by Impressionists, *symbolistes*,

Exhibitionists, and their obsessions
With light. Only milk is natural light—

A melted snow that keeps its colour
And gleams healthily as a line of surf

Washing away verse that is like child's play—
Just as dull critics milk these words to white.

OTTAWA FACSIMILE

à la manière de Pound

Why does the pig-faced virgin of the gross, unutterable size
Waddle down Somerset sobbing about Ondaatje in the rain?
Why does the ex-cashier in the oil-soaked, blue leather skirt
Piss on the bloodwet tulips pelted before the War Memorial?
Why does the finance minister, leering a *papier-mâché* face,
Creep up to me on Bank Street, to rent my unfussy pussy?

Why does *Canadian Literature* canonize poetry of this type?

À DANY LAFERRIÈRE

à la manière de Sade

Think of the marigold-haired virgin
Swivelled on a white horse, jouncing.
Think of the Hell-promising Beatrice—
Astraddle a hot white stallion, jouncing.
Imagine her lolling in that mount,
a gospel become flesh, a lilting.
Are her eyes burnt-gilty-sapphirish?
Think about that, as well.
Are her lips two *dévergondés*?
Think about that—
And think about her gold hair lashing
Her harsh, priest-entrapping thighs.

My pure religion has come to this:
Hushed frigging lust for a yellow-haired
Rouged cut, a naked, cramped space,
My belly jammed on that thin-haired
Mound, succulent, succubine orifice,
Its brown, wiry hairs twined
And twisted into the hairs rooting
My lean bolt, plunging and plunging.

Christ, I'd torch my church and sink in Hell
To sink in her just once, that blonde slut,
In Roeg's *Walkabout*, her grey skirt swishing across
Her ass, her white panties winking swank cunt.

WAYDE COMPTON

from (BOTTLE)(POEMS)

Spooky,

.

whose world this is? two speakers exhaling helically a
camel's eye's worth of stacked

..

dub plates. acetate. sharp as a chorus of coral. wreckin ship.
scratches whistlin,

....

'Bronx'. rocks'. locks'. blacks'. stocks'.' cracking.
transposition. canon

.....

got a brand new bang. node I'm sayin? after)centric)styling

.....

from(to(back slid)e)liding mix(ingcry(ing, 'what's my

.....

mother? fuckin? name?'

.....

props,

JEREMY CRONIN

THE ASSASSIN APPLIES TO THE AMNESTY COMMITTEE

So who are we? We are those who listen
Through the middle of a thumping summer afternoon
To the application that drones on with the weight of
Grain silos, grey puritans in rows, topped with canny prose.

I was asked by Brigadier Goosen,
It didn't surprise me,
If we could prepare, I was asked,
Another package.
On his desk a large envelope.

Grown now in the telling as large
As any grey silo among silos dominating
The sky-line of our rural towns, bulks topped
With improbable claims like: SNOWFLAKE.

It didn't surprise me, when I was instructed,
Was instructed, I was instructed
To prepare an attack
With what appeared to me to be
An intercepted postal item.
It was addressed to. I had stayed with them.
When the family lived in.
I was instructed to ask
Warrant Officer Raven
To insert the device into the envelope.
When he came back later I asked.

If poem be attempt to soothe
The ache of the gap between
A thing and its name, then this
Is anti-poem, is ache, is gap,
Is flight from name,
Is right up there
Atop a ponderous silo
In the middle of an African summer
Saying: SNOWFLAKE. SNOWFLAKE.

I asked him: Are you telling me
This is a bomb if I opened it
I would be killed? He said yes. I then said
Take this thing away
I don't want it here, I said.

Is the anecdote from the applicant, who smiles,
It was (if you see
What he means) self-preservation.
He smiles, he's obese, he gestures
From memory to take-it-away.
But obesity is not the point.
It is not even the symbol of anything
As he flicks, nimbly,
The tiniest of flecks
From the tailored lapel of his blazer.

A long time later.

He drags the story now on into boredom

So long
I thought we would never hear
Of the envelope again I heard
There had been
An explosion
In a house

In Lubango
When I heard about the child
The child
Being killed
There is nothing that has happened
To me, when I heard, has happened to me
That I regret more
It was like being hit
With a bucket of cold water.

The verbs of I are folded into passive.
In the knotted string of memory, he hears but hardly ever
acts.
This side up, handle with care.
Self-attributed statements are questions.
The specific is general, addresser addressee.
Everything is gummed, zip-coded, bubble-wrapped,
re-wrapped.
Perpetrators are victims.
And an explosion in Lubango becomes
A bucket of water in Pretoria.

So who are we?

We are those who have not been bombed
By our former guest,

We are those who have raised girl children beyond
Six years of age,

We are those who have opened our mail,
Yet survived,

We are postboxes
Violated by prose

We must swallow our anger, take nothing for granted, try to
think clearly

We carry the burden of ears

We are the ones who must listen, listen to unpack now
An actual past and ourselves present, knowing

The struggle to be a person
Remains an endangered address.

INGRID DE KOK

HEARINGS. VICTIMS. UNDERWATER.

"Do you promise to tell the truth,
the whole and so help me truth?"

Someone's been hurt.
But she can't speak.
They say she's "tongue-tied".

Like an umbilical neck throttle.
No spit, sound, swallow.
Voice in a bottle.

Now she's speaking underwater,
to herself, to drowning,
to her son, her lost daughter.

Her tongue's a current
washing over dead fish,
abandoned rope and tackle:

"They came for the children, took, then me,
and then, then afterwards
the bucket bled. My ears went still.
I'm older than my mother when. . . .

The gull drags its wing to the lighthouse steps.
That's the truth. So help. Whole. To tell."

JEFF DERKSEN

from SOCIAL FACTS ARE VERTICAL

It's not often I lament a product.

I'm 162 years younger than the term *ideology*.

People bloom.

"We 'persons' therefore are artifacts of labour" or fluctuating wages.

The homes on display are not display homes.

This film is "historically accurate."

"What is important, however, is not to be a Monday morning quarterback to the world's antisystemic movements."

Sucking the pleasure right out of it breaking the trademark.

Mood of production: through what do I decipher myself.

Capitalism, no longer able to be embarrassed, arrives as sentence structure.

Any aesthetes aboard?

"Numbers have lost nothing of their mystical glamour."

The sky sweeps by—this is coverage at its finest: the landscape is value to happen.

I have an idea of me.

"Neither moths nor maggots. . .".

To help an individual, say person, who knows to have less is to have more and other home truths.

Being naked in another language or at least appearing so.

Canadian signage of traveling—what's the story (morning sickness).

"A pathology of atmosphere."

This city needs a rain (a sleepy cafe) with smoke for space.

The cars outside are singing, that's the rights that won't be shimmied.

"Thus history replies, 'Who will do the dirty work'. . . ."

And who remembers the Squamish Five?

This one's going out to my detractors out there in their tractor caps (class solidarity).

A day of similes finally.

"On this point, money is a particularly untrustworthy master."

A personal moral (mole) outrage applied to friends at a distance.

Can we blame it on the discovery of the double entry book-keeping system?—I doubt it.

"This applies to everything you purchase."

We just wanted to hear ourselves say it.

Like a jury.

Will you do what hasn't been done to me?

"How to identify a worker"—they're the ones on display.

Budapest balcony bullet holes of the closest reading.

"I am also postponing, for a short time, the exposition of my analysis of anxiety."

What, the Human Conditioner?

The bottle economy on wobbly bikes, the outline of a car burnt into the back lane.

Is pleasure use value?

Please enter my mode of production, momentary and mummified like a lock is to logic.

"A similar tendency can be seen with underwear, shoes, basic furniture, etc.—at least in the richest countries."

Scientific, like aviator glasses.

"Target as small as an arm or a leg."

Thirty thousand dollars of untaxed corporate profits a minute in Canada: don't forget to personalize the "national" "debt."

"How are we going to see those who we have not yet seen"—by asking them to appear differently.

Piano from a houseboat.

Between the "discursive" and the "event". . . .

Glands against classism.

"Bathed in money."

You are value waiting to happen.

So, in order to vote you have to ask yourself are you any better off since you began reading this poem or has your economic situation remained the same?

Hey, that's m*y* ashtray collection.

Can poetry perform a social function, for instance as a message board: If Fearghal Sharkey reads this, please contact me through the publishers.

"Safety, marksmanship, judgment, dynamic situation simulation."

It ain't just a case of class or consciousness.

Does your sculpture just stand there, or does it spin?

You make me feel like having my own "internal crisis."

Imagine yourself a geopolitical power, imagine me at your side.

"The problem of getting workers to work harder for lower pay is inherently difficult."

If "the workingmen [sic] have no country" then there can be no working-class nationalism: how does this explain hockey?

I questioned authority and the question won.

Once your ethnicity is reduced to cooking, it's a lot easier to join the parade.

Can you parody something you are a part of?

It's "cult of facts" time again.

From the sublime to the ridiculous of what we want.

Suited to the "suppressed actualities" you see in others but imagine your own.

"In North America, it's very important not to confuse consumers."

The quotation marks from one word, like a performative middle-aged biker on holiday.

The randomness was as invigorating as ice.

Before I understood moods.

The linebreak possibilities of "I feel funny."

"Everything which you are unable to do, your money can do for you."

Is it unreasonable to think that I am reasonable and you are not?

His card simply read "expert."

And it is from here that my small yet "stylish" live emanates.

Melt-down sentimentality for new technological changes in long-distance rates, I'd like to be tied down for the majority of the afternoon.

A Ass Pocket Full of Wallet.

Fussy, who would have thought fussy instead of saggy.

And I do.

The practice of plastic.

Is the "middle class" a race?

Is management a culture?

That kind of coiled or caught hatred reserved for a family member.

"I dare say that no one else is writing lines such as 'voids convivial handtray intubation'. . .".

An oil strong enough for today's hyper-referential poetry.

Cheap suit—I'm impressed.

Haig, what is a Haig—is it like a Swartzkopf?

I see the boys walk by with their sunburnt nose.

I'm barely getting wider.

Mind the bollocks.

I missed the "Kiss Me I'm Polish" moment.

"So this bourgeois definition of freedom has something sordid about it."

Tell your momma and papa that I'm a graduate school boy too.

Momma, seize this mastercard from me, they won't let me use it anymore.

Please mail traced outlines of your body on an 8 1/2 X 11 sheet to me at the above address.

So, you are your own source material?

Creatively satisfying and non-greasy.

If I could be your Tuesday Weld late-fifties photo jangley guitar pop tune then would you butter perfect harm.

Pony-tail Hall of Fame

I'm smoking dynamite, listening to TNT and reading *GQ* like never before: I'm ready, ready as any man'll be.

Uh oh autobio.

I don't believe that anyone thinks of you sexually as I do after all.

At ten cents a word this poem is worth $94.50 so far.

Hey Joe where you going with that baby oil on your hand?

Don't melt on me, melt with me.

I'm going to have to ask you to be nonsexual now.

It was only then that *"I realized I had repressed something."*

In the "movement from nature to culture," where are you.

"It's human nature to do everything you can to stop the puck from going in the net."

If I were to dedicate this to "The Ruling Class," would that be dated?

I think I am a better person than I think I am.

Yuri Gagarin was technology at that point.

The term *oral* has been recuperated from poetics by personal ads.

"You think that, having planted a kidney bean in a flower pot, you are capable of raising the tree of proletarian literature."

Canadian federal policy on child poverty parallels Michael Jackson.

The marxist part of my brain is not working just now.

You are a lot of information.

Suddenly we are like sexual truckers.

I answer, irony is a purer form of earnestness.

And now, everything that seemed insurmountable seems mountable.

JOHN HIGGINS

from SIGNIFYING CHAIN

for Tom Raworth and
Fredric Jameson

I
the force field in very different kinds
lived experience of built space itself
the subject with heightened intensity
remarks: there are
for us too, it is language how
the poem is no longer to be found
in some more genuine dialectic
somehow to lift our minds
stay within a single thought
production in order to reflect more
object world the new
twofold proposition: first, that person
breakdown in the signifying chain
bewildering new space of late

II
it is language, that person
the force field
in very different kinds
lived experience the subject
with heightened intensity
the poem is
no longer to be found
in some more genuine dialectic
somehow to lift our minds

in order to reflect more
object world, the new
twofold proposition: first,
breakdown in the signifying chain
bewildering new space of late

V
the poem to lift our minds
in the signifying chain
twofold proposition
in very different kinds
some more genuine object world
the new dialectic to be found
bewildering intensity
first, that person
lived experience no longer
reflect more new space
with heightened language force
a single thought
is the order it is
breakdown field

IX
in some different world of late
signifying force with lived experience
twofold dialectic
heightened intensity
bewildering thought no longer
the proposition is the poem
built more genuine
reflect that person
subject the field
object space
language chain
in new kinds
our first
order is breakdown

X
intensity is bewildering the world
order is genuine force
language a single chain
stay no longer subject
to be found in different minds
dialectic remarks
built space
that person first lived
somehow signifying experience
twofold field in breakdown
late reflect
more poem
our object
lift new thought

XIV
different minds
field breakdown
bewildering order
single language
our world is genuine
dialectic experience
the first proposition
signifying person
subject to intensity
somehow twofold
reflect remarks
force us to lift
a thought in some production
the poem

DANNY HUPPATZ

TWO POEMS

SKETCH: JAVA, BALI, NOVEMBER 1997

upturned lotus leaf. competing crickets chirp & scratch. vibrating tones become background noise (pull it forward). sweet incense smells: to give thanks to bring luck to continue to bring forth the past & summon the future to the orange present-tip dropping gray & crumbling into ash. pinpricks in the curved blanket above our heads. when green becomes turquoise becomes crimson on a leaf's underside. generation. regeneration. the river.

to survive among the red hibiscus one needs silvereye consciousness passivity & vibration sense. coconut palm trunks marked with time crack & warp abandoning capsules of watery milk. clicking bamboo blinds against the balcony. cauliflower clouds over the ocean.

there are potted plants: crimson frangipanis & palms for the tourists. blinded am i one unrepentant sun. the way foreign capital creates holes then penetrates them. you are sitting patiently crosslegged beneath the banyan tree carving a log's knots & branches into spirits. clumsy orangetiled roof. in a painted scene from the mahabharata a river separates the world of the living from the world of the dead.

it is written on the back of a postcard: you are waving as you pass alone rowing on glassy water towards the mountains crinkled silhouettes in the misty distance growing tiny under blossoming clouds. fruit hidden in branches' angles. sculpting sculpting how

will you sing me? am i the oil slick collecting at the mouth of the river?

an incantation from unseen throats thickens the atmosphere before trailing into a quivering vibrato. you help people onto the bus with no doors. transformation. into smoke. weaving bamboo weaving bamboo mosscovered & matted with leaves waiting horizontal for the sky to crack. how will you write me? am i pouring concrete into your enveloping heat?

SKETCH: YIRUK/WILSON'S PROMONTORY, MARCH 1998

you are foamy windblown stretched across the inlet windtrained up cliff down shaley shore. glowing with orangetipped buds a particularly coastal rubbing–

mountain your vision uninhibited cloudbound spectacle of driving & driving & walking to see. what i love most about you bathed in foggy orange is the way you move so slowly regulated at the tourist information centre sectioned off set aside for the eye set aside for the ear to hear you fold & unfold at continent speed.

bits chipped. seals or trees or tin extracted. store warmth somehow. descent into six thousand years of language drifts cracking to form peninsular scratched by pen insular wordsmiths forging nouns together. expulsion of lichen life or calyptorhynchus funereus (black flash in the sky) it was the seals in 1798 & in boots they come george bass spreading history across this shaley rooftop.

washed saltwind boulders expel tough spindly brush. light will find a way. attached to surfaces smothering windshaped clouds merging blurry into mist. birdsong our aleatoric music we discussed cage that day but only in relation to mushrooms.

wandering snail line through patterned sand under lone helicopter emptiness scattered kelp limp over tidal rhythms.
shellcaught point of fluidity scored with hermitcrab holes oblivious squiggle under threat of erasure a

gull dip

into space already conquered
to be one of a tight formation
to sing to
to sing too
to live in
sensitivity

sparkle of headlights before dark. the feral species, who do you include? buried below suitable myths the sky's indifference to i. split flock mocking tackward insular as it becomes a willful something if you have lighthouse vision some said good i said what does it feel like the bookfresh library surface now a break: who moves into that space? loan followed the swans from the yarra & watches over us from the mountains.

PETER JAEGER

TWO POEMS

FOR REVEL, PRESS SWIVEL

Only moan moss and mottle tatters tuft. Elsewhere less roles fondle an index of gush-coded odours. Fed on ripple, groan and tally core is seed for tip. Refusal removes us from modes of amass.

> *What rhymes with hollow, but means to role or lie prone in a liquid, viscous, or yielding substance (eg. mud-hole, loam)? What hippos do, only slim? To use the apparatus in reverse is to indicate the framing role of sluice, for the phrase "byzantine eyes" remains intact, regardless of the stimulation engineered by wet.*

Duration launches tools
including the maxim *of course*
along with refusals to clique.

When leaky, swell: I Manhattan you.

HOUSING APPARATUS

Let's call them
fastening de
vices. You
will see a
thriving com
munity
at the turn
of the cen
tury. The
annual
carp der
by, held go
in no shack.

How some Ontarios pronounce sabbaticals.
Three or maybe key in rhythm method.
Gadget, furlough, mutter.

I just need
to get sheet
rock to met
al studs. No
awl is the
first Satur
day in Oct
ober. The
town dock is
to keep a
way from sheds.

Device, retreat, mumble.
Local vocalizer.
Number the veer on one two two three three one.

He's just sleep
ing with pow
er or by
hand is ob
vious. If
the above
sounds this hun
dred year old
town. Once a
small fishing
and shipping
port, this har
bour now wel
comes your home.

Prime by waters, neighbours.
Machine, outing, murmur.
Articulated calculations.

JOHN KINSELLA

TWO POEMS

RE - META - CASCANDO
or THE FIRST ANNIVERSARY

8 lines from samuel beckett's "Cascando"

in their trash can or on
their bench
assemblages
in their bench or on
their
trash can someone
discover territorials

and assemblages in zones of borrowed refrain

1. why not merely the despaired of
the break itself seems too unreal & only we perform

as publically taught (we should), wherein or

so expected: just as good to have someone
tell the storm

2. occasion of
a reconciliation which must happen
before the ceremony as consent gives totality

to this our considered disaster: Polaroids

are much cheaper than a pro-photographer

3. wordshed

when only the letters in their utterances
mean: the sound of your voice indecipherable,
a single word as on the banks the sandbags

mount against the flood, rarely *ha!*

the Avon broken into the town, over the growing
lands. in England "creek" is a bit of a joke.

4. is it not better abort than be barren

Woke with new wife. Stepchild watching television.

But there is no means of production, **profit** in the air.

The photograph configurations on the wall have

changed. Some

new objects, the rifle

once busily downing parrots no longer visible. The old

green falcon utility is still

up on Taylor's Road near the tank-on-its-side—school
busstop—the
salt's diminishing & the crops thickening. The contour
banks
have worn down a little more & it looks as if one of
those neglected
disc-ploughs in the top paddock has been resurrected.

The season

is blatantly fertile. There even seem to be fewer car-

casses in the "sheep's graveyard".

5. the hours after you are gone are so leaden

that I collapse under the weight of my own demons,
no longer placating rejecting or dispensing

with yours

without whom dispossession draws else-

where,

where they are needed.

6. they will always start dragging too soon

like the legs of a heron locked in flight
that of the air is so physically different
from us outside assumed
as the knowledge it represents
though concerns only itself
as
references subverting the read text

of the preened body

as commodity

& the need to touch feathers
as the ode liberates
& the flight is oppressed
by the rhythm:
the bird contrived itself
unique

though lost corrupt
its surplus speech,
as the uttered sound deep
in paperbarks
the water mirror black
deflected our indifferent fears
unless we relate it to our mood,

the bird is a bird
and the story builds
& is genuinely strange
and the bird is political
in and only in our usage
absolute
in language,

sound collation
is the whoop of the swamp
as we migrate
within outed areas
without encroaching
or creating borders
with specific
communications.

7. the grapples clawing
blindly the bed of
want

imposed against the vengeful's
suffering at the hands
of conscience, a parasite with hooks
imposing, dousing down the costly linen
spread like a drop sheet
over a particular
shyness

8. bringing up the bones the old loves

jiggered in the rattle bag of divination
memory nothings the pleasantries: up
the snowy egret majestic in the hazy skies

but breathing deep the air is clear:
such a bird clots on a metal frame,

a sine **cure**: that deity as light–

contracepted– as deeper

than **deep the diggings cure!**

BODY SNATCHING

for Elizabeth Grosz

"The phantom is an expression of nostalgia for the unity and wholeness of the body, its completion. It is a memorial to the missing limb, a physical delegate that stands in its place. There is thus not only a physical wound and a scar in the amputation or surgical intervention into any part of the body. The phantom limb is the narcissistic reassertion of the limb's presence in the face of its manifest biological loss, an attempt to preserve the subject's narcissistic sense of bodily wholeness (an image, as Lacan points out, developed through the mirror stage)."

—Elizabeth Grosz,
Volatile Bodies

(1)

Wearing her family tree like an extra limb
she made hay while the sun shone—
on the couch, in the face of disaster,
she sang lullabies, as if the world
were her baby. The group's collective energy
shone like a halo and kept the Others out.
Birds erupted from her fingertips,
swamps dried out in her presence.
The ooze retreated somewhere between a rock and a hard
    place
vaporized in the slow undulations of the valley

as the supple orifices of planting steeled themselves against
the seed-drill,
the pod, the vegetable body that replicates and moves on e-
motionless, like a trick of perpetuation mirrored and
delegated
"family", the genealogical quirk: she sensed an outerbody,
the shell of her grandmother, entrapment
of an earlier self: who can we trust
if not the doctors, our relatives?

(2)

He articulated as if his voice should carry
a specific weight, presence like volume
that'd fill the room: a projection
like the mise en scène that is the interior
of his tractor's cabin (his pride and joy,
an almost new John Deere). The plough's hyperbole
upturning relics where there are none to be found,
the primary cultures not building durably,
just traces—carbon copies of an earlier draft.
The yields are expected to be higher than ever.

(3)

In the hothouse they're all incestuous.
Fluid is more readily retained.
It is conducive to recycling.
Biosphere. Micro homunculi magnified big
and transplanted into casual conversation.
Like a wig. Or an encounter with angel hair.
The whole family was welcome at the gathering.
Waterbirds filled the driest places.

(4)

She specifically laid herself out
for his scrutiny. He examined the base of the limb
and declared its width a travesty. There was
no precedent. The first rains came at the right time.
But the continued unabated and the topsoil
ran reddish brown into the creeks, down to the river.
Distantly, the estuaries choked and fishermen
lamented the lack of sport. They formed pressure groups.
They believed the weather wasn't only to blame.

(5)

Flowdown stigmata as if vocation or vision
or being struck down at the bus stop are only excrescence;
occupying the same body space, synchro reflex
actions, as if walking towards an end,
picaresque or screen print, centrefold spread
and the whole lot leaking out through the staple holes:
legible handwriting had them saying
he writes with a feminine hand,
recording the exact dimensions of the bald domed heads
belonging to his abductors, the beauty
of the Darling Ranges
in Spring roneo'd over and over again

MICHELE LEGGOTT

THAT NIGHT THAT MORNING

XENIA

walking in the rose-garden we have imagined the genius of a later time. *Blessings* the temperature of body heat fall in big drops on bare skin. The sun, the wind, the rain; the snap of the bow on the trail of a scent. Three ways the vista is mountains, and terraces the colour of stars whose names are recorded on the other side of this page. There we find ourselves one day in early spring setting out to look for the rivers of heaven The journey will be described again but this small book, tattered and begging more questions than it answers, is originary. It is for you, your drumskin heart in need of no translation, you at this rendezvous older but never forgotten and the book is what happened along the way.

Water falls in endless strings, glossy calypso files washing off salt. Here is a comb. Here is an open window. The silver mirror is nothing to me now though once I held it dear. You who knock on the yellow door, sit down at my table and read. I am going out. Eat when you are hungry, sleep when your eyes grow heavy. The house is yours.

THE SONGS OF GOOD HOPE

I was bee-belly setting out from the island of the first morning, banners streaming, delphic sons on hand. Four directions were in my company, and the bowmen of Zenith and Nadir. Everywhere we went I made songs to be fired into the hearts of strangers. Gold dust and ivory were part of the return but mostly the arrows brought back good fortune. Nothing more is needed to prove us out of the world.

Then I lost the blue-flowered tree and learned bitterness and not-bitterness though not in that order. The sky was full of triangles and peacocks, tumbling fish, a water snake and a table mountain. I was insensible and there were no songs, only fire-edged letters scrolling off a silent face. My arrows flamed against the abyss and were extinguished.

woodsmoke wintersweet winter-spring breakfast, a north-facing balcony looking over the archipelago. One of the sugarloaves was mine or a road by night across the southern ocean. East and west I saw it again: far slopes of afternoon, lee shoulder against the wind, atmospheric of the other's vision. All in silence.

It was gone and the chase boats useless though I knew where to go and we were quick getting off. Coming back the water was alive with seabirds hunting, feathers and fuss in a circle. Whipped up deep. I slept again in the upstairs room and this time the coast was clear. I am learning to walk in a circle.

GIRLS WITH ROSES BEING CARRIED ON TABLES TO THE INN

second person so recently singular the first step is half a world and instruments of the sky to measure. *Antlia, Apus, Ara.* You pump me up. *Carina, Circinus, Caelum.* Breastbone of the boat Delirious Moment. *Indus, Lupus, Mensa.* My indian, my wolf we have made an altar. *Musca, Norma, Octans.* She, whisper. Invoking an inconspicuous quadrant we located her house. *Pyxis, Puppis, Pictor.* Stern mariner how will you compass me? I am picking up the pieces of this body and putting them in a box. *Tucana. Vela. Volans.* Somebody's alphabet painted on a globe. Flying boat. Catalina over Ramphastos. Heroes of enlightenment velivoli, books on their knees, looking up agape. *Ploomp!* Fell into what? put a finger where?

Microscopium. Telescopium, Horologium. The clock between the rivers has hourly words with a lion on the ground and a dory fish. The carpenter's square triangulates views from the top deck where I wanted to remain indefinitely, musing on the sculptor's tools, the painter's edge, Sophy's zoo. Phoenix meets Columba and they both go up in smoke. These notes on my knee. This hiatus.

At the ticket office my documentation was examined. *Are you blind* the fuller's boy asked. He was in charge of the fare. *Yes,* I said, *I am.* In the change was a small silver leaf.

crossing quay crossing customs the end is here *that's it! no more! you can all go home!* M. Dumnov in a sandwich board shouting to ants on the Novotel wall the day government fell in the city of light. He was ignored. There were flags on every corner, bread and wine and lilies in broad cups, and plaques commemorating other sunny days at the top of the elevator well. The crowds surged after their boat. Doves flew over the city. Every step was a return without memory to a place of origin. *narcissi. baked chocolate.* Helium in the hands of children. Suds in the fountain.

There is a manner of people called Corybantes who believe when the moon is in eclipse that it is enchanted and therefore they beat their basins with thick strokes to release her. Their worship is performed with noisy and extravagant rites. They howl it out, dancing and glowing on the high tops with frantic fire. A procession is made and numinous images carried but the hour of conjunction is not revealed. It is said the celebrants sleep with their eyes open.

We went anonymous in the din, found students sitting on the ground with scripts beating their hands and saying nothing. In their eyes I saw the ring on my finger begin a clockwise turn. In their faces were our faces all dewy at the centre of the world.

pyrophoric and breathing sharply at the incline we enter a narrow passage where torches flare. Such incantation, such prière! Wild cries and the frenzied music of flutes drums and cymbals *I always order this I'm always on my mobile I've got five dollars to last the weekend.* Street clowns, sad parrots, luting mummers *I'd like a bed on the Twentieth Century please.* Doppling knots of lingua in our ears, the speed of red light expanded.

Further up the Via Lacrima is what we're looking for, sparks and hammering, an artisan at his trade under the old volcano. Our pageant winds alongside his booth fingering the silverware on its velvet, trying on bits of magic armour, haggling with the girl assistant. Her limping boss is almost finished with the piece, light strong alloy, numbers for a flamey pin. The price is paid *léger léger* and we're on our way across the Place de la Guerre with its shells and fruit stall. Apples on the bough. Fish in the sea. She, whisper goddess, blew.

An afternoon flight. Hot rain. *I spent months getting that right.* A row of numbers, a row of letters, a row of lights. Moon chew. Stipule. Fire. Confusion rejoins history by the Courthouse being preserved to face an uncertain future. Above us more steps set into the mountainside. Cottonwood snow.

blossom

oxyphoric

flight of sails

other places

indigo

overflowing

almond

money pool

roman fleuve

one moment

so fearful

summer house

storms of noise

old motors

hesperidium

dark-adapted

swim out

momentum

occident

long talk

light honey

atmospheric

barefoot

o phoeb

AS EVER

I hunted you down in the grasses of summer and we fought on the river bank for the last word, an interrogative curve that would not yield or cease. *For she too sailing overhead* there is no last word, as there is no other way but to come through this trench. To walk at sunset *on clear nights* near the great river come by the same divide to where we are. A broken circle *in the likeness of* palmettos and into it our corybamtes banging on a drum, emancipation in the park, whoops and yells *the silver moon* and a speech about the road ahead. *Looked down with pleasure on* a lady with bird wings kneeling in front of a king *her own calm image.* If it's too high you know it will hurt your feet. If it's a dream it is already *reflected* time and mind *on the calm.*

I see a mock cortège rounding the fountain, climbing the shallow steps. When it reaches the grove there are greetings and a mingling of process. Everything hangs in the balance. The pedestal is empty, the casket sprung, there is a throng and a clearing *the burnished surface* where I step forward as if for the first time. There is enough light, deep breath *of the lake, her mirror* to read by. Quiet flick of pages. Lip lap shiver. When I lift my eyes from the last words you are there. Together we make morning.

ALAN LONEY

from FRAGMENTA NOVA

1.

book it up to writing, one word
as a thing or two, a child
isolated in the plethora

what's this art that
no longer consoles,
disturbs hours

for the flare of
photographs
all over the time

I had thought to come empty

words, things
the arrangement of
materials, votary
& alien: 'How calm

you are. How calming
it is
to be with you'

2.

take charge of yr life!

At this lateness, even
the birdsong's not
familiar, cutting dead
flower-heads happens
in no known order of
feeling, and

each attraction distracts,

tho all's there
for dear memoir

]fragmenta nova[

It isn't easy.
It isn't hard

the new det has altered
shape & feel of his body

WRITING WAITING
WAITING WRITING

3.

"how to use this camera"

frame over the subject and compose.
idea settings for different situations.
symbols will never actually look like this.

inserting the protrusion on the strap.
hold against your nose and look through.
a quick stroke with the tip of your fingernail.
subject is ready for shooting.
latest mechanism for analysis of unique know-how.
pressing you is an obstruction of the glass.
it counts down when nothing appears.
illuminates, illuminates, is displayed.
the shake warning will not prevent details.
of plants, lightly press fully from infinity.
head and shoulders add sparkle to the eyes.
a landscape through a window from a dark room.
self-timer includes yourself in the panel.
improper exposure in the portrait mode.

4.

"there is a song for me"

The tree has said nothing, repeatedly
all morning

Glass. Shells. Stone.
A silent instrument, even
of tears, weighted
with clay

Something like this: Five
sparrows eat crumbs off
my plate. A pigeon scares them
away, perches on the chair,
but can't get to the food,
for its own territorial space is
too wide to risk being that close

to the human perched opposite.

white paper
white desk
white lamp
white walls
white lies

5.

'a piece of cake'

Harder than I thought.
Purple roses, heady scent,

'what do I love and / where are you'
is a life's work today & tomorrow
listening for what comes next
in a new country. The rain
darkens the courtyard stones
'into the light', and the journey
is not so simply that the words

have competing ears
to see by. I touch
with an almost extreme gentleness
my slim, soft, new body.

Emptiness will be exchanged
with emptiness.

"I love you"

KAREN MACCORMACK

TWO POEMS

AT ISSUE IV

reapply strapless clouds stark lattice
begins support in the pockets reinforce finish up
impeccable to portability unless an intangible holds home
blues
buffer splits, locks gap on ground
avoid saying grief
learn unlearn cultural
bring stop as a condition
it's terrrible "gets over"
better is a movie everyone finds entitled as a condition
clichés context of manners mention *heal*
a hurtful uncertain mobility
understood *life-proof color* on us all
as lend to swell, irreplaceable, read the room another picture
lesson warning
interlocutor down despite instinctive etiquette for heartfelt
construction
predicted reminiscent casino cherub
affordable study limited
fatten means clashes adjusting
succumb what you waist up
disappear
politically answered gravity-trained engagement
works higher modernity
with mismatches registering flat expectation
frenzy was a price
to caress enough nightmares

THRONG

asunder edible fairy tales
the thrill wayside practicality foil
low-key insists entry began outbid bowled over
burgled compliment in opening strands of quantity
collar to map, chin to chains *go streamlined*
arm's length into hand-set cuff
constant enough to ruckus
exclude
speculate making feedback clustered with storage
text intimate
remake loose-fitting behavior
market snapping shift graduating to give interference
accomodate bending
lots to function
next time illiteracy alive
abstract stab of typed gear options
hot cold props span protagonist
don't-read-itself tableau appraising movement
inventory spikes arsenal
and squeeze obstacles command spills
social info-bursts
sexy snap cross-sectioned framing
taken knock-kneed tight
pre-sexual fitting with atmosphere
stringently unspotted fluids
disbelief *enclaves lurk*
typically faux-rural breaks spell
miscast *deserted dawn arrival*
unwritten comeback
drubbings from undoubtedly consumer firmness
hyperdrive hired big-night attention
available heave-ho frantic more notorious
now overrate resistant
someone else doesn't stop
throttle shod with hoopla mementos
modern-concentrates
drawstring energized on the mark turns three-way
now clarify slinking pantsless revival
speaking meantime regular strokes

quarried geometry, pictorially "straight" bungalow, paper
route, blind date retrospective short-circuited
bone *uncommitted extension*
calligraphy on the side toxic off-key
tantalizes enlightened
and dicker isn't snatched
we performance smithereens
akin to chase crash ratings
unstable responsibility
profile squeezes hottest segments become sensations going
deplored
suggesting impulse to depict frankness
to say "do not feel, *encounter,* analysis "
insight isolation another outside notion
standard-issue unusual mini-continent
inaccessible restored cushy volcano
equipped with pristine rentals
watching calculations published
to gauge translated molecular stabilizer, slow-cooled walking
distance binding, uncoiling
a network opens tangled research
bonds vapor struck by continue
concentrating, observe dispersion
emulsions other beginning a pinch-squinted procedure
unsound roulette to misappropriations
admit premature diverted pinnacle
insist/arrange selectable precautions
shares prosperity several locations
citing agencies, the possibilities know that localized conclu-
sions differentiate challenges
compression sideswept adolescence
French-twist reruns glide-on 100% Allure
slips triangle role appointment
tucked stellar run detachable
unfurling warp-printed first-floor rainbow
incident-smattering peak function rising
guess postconceptual prefers *content oriented*

§ELF 3

LABEL

§ such as bridge the cultural gap

with a quick twist

§ enhancement technology –

strategically adds to

§ " . . . heading away from unisex"

followed by dichotomy

§ apply with *not-just-yet*

maximizes customized

§ beam agitates burst of

but no special delivery giving back

§ better at-home instincts

recurring discovered *late*

§ individualizing *not surprisingly*

anterior susceptible

§ reintroduced durability against

options for proportions length of

§ sizzle unspent

urge as misreading extravagant

§ "the squeamishness starts on top"

and pure chance or you name it

§ readout intake now

fusion by 1-800 open it

§ *currently* won't dull between *remaining*

comparisons fluctuating

§ how to phrase sporadic whereas declare

chronic with experience in print

§ rehaul the pantheon

from-to taste leaves its mark

§ no bones about it burns your level of guilt

looks like barely budged

§ "aging (as) . . . a symptom of immobility"

for beginners to art exhibits

§ strengthen the *anterior serratus*

"tailored" to your flow

§ every virtual going-the-distance

functional explains merchandising

§ tableful of technically among others

effect of one continuous line

§ proportions go ahead especially through the handheld office §

§ ask yourself tangible

(implications not included)

§ the answer rubbed all over

will eventually grow out

§ leave of absence well marked

creases ribbon offshoot trails

§ mediators on call "cultural competence"

with every prescription tending toward

§ so outwit underestimate

for up to 48 hours

STEVE MCCAFFERY

THREE POEMS

ZERO IS NOT EQUIVALENT TO ZENO

Zero is not equivalent to Zeno.
When I write down this thought another thought appears at
the border
of an alternative sheet of logic.
Chance is not equivalant to chants
but the flight of a payphone into language.

I am picturing Georges Braque in a newly rented office that I,
the writer,
used to own while meditating on the possibility that there is
something inside
that I've forgotten.

Such notes are thoughts passed between one mind and unity.

Unity is empty & symmetry a single commodity typewriter.
Therefore either one is Zeno or one is inside zero.

That way you reach a name in this theme considered as a
whole.

Whereby a sequencing is I considered as a unity through
all its empty sets.

Because my car breaks down and I take it to the vet.

THE LOGIC OF SIX

97632. Trajectories to seek a lexicon and an inference. Ask so a choir falls due to the federation of a sentence. 415 eleven 12. Radio to air. The collapse to coincidence on the nine dice sides. Fifteen 13. This represents the fifth. An 8. I have said it.

To the context alone a vertical horizon might petition diagonally its on grace notes as an episodic shift. Chapter twenty four. This represents my having said so. I am saying the 6th. But not always as ready. The figurative would seem aware of a trick deployed a couple of lines before. So I don't say this. 1158 fifty six 32 2612 does not represent the tenth. Or any number. 7. 5. 3 now. The figures speak so this must have said it.

A paragraph administers five drops of liquid to an I. Oddly six even 9. Petitioned diagonally as an episodic shift this forms a vertical scalar of 6 between three. A figural imbalance does not say the same. I see or it says. This most certainly becomes the fifth. 806 teen. The last of the allegories.

Having nothing to do with anything above. Twenty 1. XVIII. A vertical smooth and unstriated precipitate of event. The reclined decline to a 6ty3. This saying collapses into the coincidence of the nine dice sides. Not yet as above them. Fifteen 1163. This agent is beckoning some logic of reception. 18 perverse and somewhere nine indestructible. There rests the saying. In an effort to stay smooth administering a vertical horizon to the eleventh of all these numbers. XXX76XIIVII. A lexicon as an interference and so acquired the past fails. Signs of this as residue. Nine (9) six (5) five (3) one (1.)

Somehow this credits a missing surplus as a genealogy that limits growth. 8733599. Mixed passages to the negative. Of what. This besides is now a beckoning. If what. There rests a seeing. Posthumous birth before the principle attests. Of an end soon. For 6 what 8. A paragraph upon this and positioned it might seem diagonally through an inference towards that lexicon below it. XVI. I have placed it as the ninth.

2

Volume ten is a teleology to limit breathing. Surplus still petitioned. Partitioned 7 thirteen 8ty 1. One 12 like all the rest. The other way around a4ords seventeen treatises. Paragraph seven. Around what. The platform might mean sense. I had just taken place when this was already happening. Radio to air not said. Six. Writing with atoms and periods. Seven. Not then. Eight. Where then. The 5. Not where.

Along the apparatus of a line exists a foreign policy for words. Some sixty fives. Another 92. This once represented a twelfth of all of this. I have said that. The strength of the probable nine dice sides. Translation supplied by the father founder. Or rather a squandering of space. A one-way pesticide. Not here. The twenty-two but a 3. Not when I have said this. A one to the three. Another 35.

Thus the 5th part of any language. 91997. The numbers when multiplied. The remnants literal. Litotes of creditor six to debtor seventy-one. By the imposition of a contractual property two reads as my fifteen again. You are seventy-three now. Alliance of a choir with the federation of all sentences. Everything above that is wrong. Out take in accurate. I have said it before. That the nine becomes another two. In this form the trajectories might change to represent that fifth as fifteen. Subject. In so far as when disappearing in the 20. This appearance in a six.

Trajectories through five a lexicon and seven. And so a 3 falls due to the federation of the fifth. Radio to air. The collpase to sevens on the nine dice sides. Fifteenth thirteen to represent the six. Eight. Seven has said it. To the context thus a vertical thirteen petitioned diagonally as an episodic four. 9 keeps saying the fifth. But not always in eleven. The figurative accordingly would seem aware of IX deployed a couple of sevens before. So VII doesn't say this. Or any number. Allegory seven for 531. The numbers speak and that has said this.

Paragraph 19 administers 5 drops of liquid to a one. 4 8 eleven 6 9. This figural imbalance doesn't say this time. Six. One. One

sees or one says. This most certainly becomes the sixth. 66. Sixteen.

3
Having a different seventeen to do with thirty 8 above. 21. Eighteen vertical sixes on an unstriated precipice of elevens. The recline to 16. 6ty three. This is twice seven.
1460. This eigty 7 collapses into the coincidence of nine dice threes. Not as above them. XV eleven VI 3. This below it is beckoning to four as a logic of numbers both perverse and 16 indestructible. There rests the 11.

Five 221 seventeen 12 VI. It's this effort to stay six at 6 that administers a vertical eleven to the 5th of all these incidents. Episode 376137. A twenty VI and an interference which so acquired the nine falls to three in this residue. Nine six 6 five. A mixed seventeen here with the negative. Of what. 4ty III beside fifty 6 when beckoning. Of ten. There rest the six. Posthumous 12 before the seventy six attestations. Of an eleven soon. For six. A paragraph upon this and petitioned it would seem diagonal again through eithy six thoughts towards a ninety 5 below it. Five 3 XVI. I have placed the eight. Ten in the fifth.

A thirty three to limit the last 18. 70 still petitioned. Partitioned 73 eigthy one one 12 like the two twice removed. The other five above ground. Seventeen. Four. Around what. This new 78 might mean extended sense. I had just taken five when six already was nineteen. Fifty 5 five III seven. Twnety eight to three not nine. Writing with sevens and 6teens. Plus seven. Not ten. Eight. Where then. The five. Not five.

Some eights. The four. One three. This apparatus for a six exists as a foreign eight to words. A sixty five at last. The 92. This represents the fifth. I have said six. The strength of the thirteen nine dice sevens. Translation supplied by the father of forty five. A sixteen deleted. Or rather a squandering of five. The one two pesticide not twelve when I said six. A one some twos. Nineteen thirty-V.

Just a fifth seventeenth of a language demultiplied in eighteen figurals. Creditor six to seventeenth 17. By the imposition of a contractual demand upon allegory ninety two. Sixteen seeing six before it. The nine becoming another two. In all of this the trajectories might change to re-seventeenth the fifth. A 15 them some sevens. Or any number. Subject. 17. In so six as four when. This 20th appearance. In a six.

4

Nine 7 (6) 3 (two.) Trajectories to a V a 17 and a 7. And so a III falls 6 to the eighteen sides of the 5th. Seventy nine chapters to paragraph VII> The line collapses into limited phrase groups on the IX dice sides. XV. 13. This fails to represent the fifth. X not always eleven. The XXVI would seem aware of a nine deployed a couple of sevens before. 19 seven doesn't say it's IX. Or any number. Allegory seven. Phrase 5. Part III. The thirteens speak and XI has thought it earlier.

A fifty (2) two (50) administers five sevens of XIX to an eight. Four 8 eleven VI six IX. This numerical imbalance does not remain a five. Six. Then one. And previously one six inside two nines. This is certainly XVII becoming the fifth outside of 80 different attempts. Three at last with thirty eight deletions to the side. XXI. 18. A twelve 6 and an unstriating XII into eleven.. The fifteen is a 16. Sixty isn't 3. VII remains seven. Fourteen reaches 60. This secondary eighty of the set collapses into the XXXVII sections of the 9 dice fives. XLV remain above them. The 15 in eleven the VI in III. Nineteen chapters below a start that's beckoning. The logic of six pervades perverse and indestructible as four of ten of the remaining trajectories in two.

Completed 25 October 1998

SIN HAVING SETTLED

I

Sin having settled on a key
(in doors, up music, but of a typewriter)
QWERTY: Susan B. but no Anthony.
It is or it isn't. Susan B. but
no Anthony
no anthropology no Cleopatra
no neither either if it was
then it wasn't Frank Sinatra but still
no Susan B.
as it will if it happens though
it won't be Free
Will but no Anthony
knows Cleopatra not Sinatra
neither Frank nor Ernest yet
the importance of being
and time
Ernest time for Clementine
from time to time just
skiing and time
skiing and nothingness
either Sartre
Cleopatra Frank
Sinatra or
Susan B. Heidegger

but no Anthony.

II

1. Thirty thorny ant attack
2. drives you Wilde with an e
3. a wild minute disturbance every minuet

Sin has settled on a key

(up doors, but music, in a typewriter)
Oscar splits
bones left in a Porche
right car to write carry on

Dissed aunt but no Anthony
a thirsty Tony ant attack
antinomy would or it wouldn't wooden
carving wouldn't curve for sure
Susan C. now
but not bent.

III

Sun having settled on a cloud
two effects of wind
Thirty answers answer swerve
Susan D.
but no Anthony
any t
any h
any o
any n

"I thought we were moving to tuna in French"
to capture
c'est ou c'est pas

Say separate rates
for Frank
for Ernest
for Martin
for Oscar
for Anthony

Choose one from these five.

1.9.97
rev. 5.9.98

ERIN MOURÉ

AT FLEUVE CRANIAM

Where we puncture doubt,
or wear doubt's punition

Ssalve
Salvo

Dwellt
Couraget

Amicable the girl Claire whose eyes
have flashed in books my books

June said this, her head up, laughing
(our memory of a train she slept)

Corticle
Cellule

These are tear-sheets to imbue (abash)
her particulars

(a name for the place between the fingers
where they meet the palm

Aches
Empedokles
Marie

---

1. Fortify or
(narrate inversion)
2. To adore

It was "her body"
walking toward "me" out of those "trees"

Some things are singular as pictures only
avoid particulars

You can see regret in this

You can watch her walking
(narrate inversion)

Who
What
Where

When
Why

In this trail of unease, this
repertoire of doubt

A pantheon we remember

Happenstance gives us

My world wants so badly to be the case
before it can be "my" world

Aa
Bb Ce

Simultaneity of grief and "this"

The abruptness of necessity's coil
the harsh fact of it reaching outward to satisfy

"This" = "life"

happily she asked was not retrieved

Just what it's cooked up
to be

Those years spent
trying to be "speakable"

People (girls) ran down the great stone steps of the palace

Toward a shore or boat
My shore or roan boat

(imperfection's airport)

Later, grief's well
There are these letters
alphabetic
alphaebetic

openings in the word itself
their
minute script rature

Always, the "worth saying"
Philosophy after a bike accident

Her endogymy did so endure
Tho the top rail of that fast machine

bruised her

Do you still say imperfection's word
when I called out?

Do you see that one stroke I swam
before going under?

Such handsomeness is worldly pride!
Accomplisshment!

To admit, her strange ligature
Doubt's truss to me
A strongest pull or reconnoitre

Phase light behind the eye
once shut

Phosphorus' drug is also memory
Orpheal in the head's river

where I fell into the winsome fleuve

amenable to that harsh ligature

---

amenable still

olé

KHULILE NXUMALO

from CRACKING THE ROAD'S FAST (A PROEMDRAMATIC)

(the STAGE IS EMPTY and dim, in the light of an incomplete blue moon. ***Ndramas*** *and* ***Bende****, dressed in the most colourful of attires, stroll in, look up and then through us) :*

Ndramas *(through goggled eyes):* Night
waits for a daylight to flatten out and go, velvet
moths velvet moths
but look i am flying wide above melting trees
above stinking seas
I'm hauling stars into my
rounding heart.
And now you with a fruit basket-full imagination.

Bende: But I will be brave
for you

Ndramas: there's one ocean of pleasure in giving
in to each other, I am bubbling compulsion
in case my echoing visions delay to rest
your motors

Bende : No I will be brave. . . .

Ndramas: You have brought your
bowl only to consume vapor of this wounded
dry pool,
the distant stars
we see twitter to and fro tonight, writhing full of
hands sing to us many roads
to which we must look directly then. . . . .

fragment/peril

1

Histories, pro
verbs pieces
words of parting end
near the tranquil
silent whisper
of stagn
ant waters
buzzing
with inside life

words of parting like parting
streams

words of parting like why
dry
rivers
never reach the Oceans

In the long distance called past
comes a massgraved
igger, frail, bent
and swaying
to the burden
of undep
arted souls that cling
upon her

gaunt souls addicted to light
pining for an
exit route

4

and so it is gossiped also
the seed never hibernates beneath

but crops
and produces

like we shall witness
deep in the coeliac swamps

the evergreen lush life there
gleams
like grass games incorporeal belts and
the laughs that cut
and blended softly
with the air of friendship.

if it was a see-saw
as when seen you saw
when I fell off

I will know,
ginqi-gonqo
these things come piss and pass,

so if also
deep in the swamps of your stomach
would grow the weeds
and travel to your head
and if it all
seeks asylum between my teeth?

liberate it.
liberate it.
liberating ourselves in the walking distance
to the post office.

5

It was many years after hackers burners killer's rampage when you saw massgravedigger come limping . . . . .through the flames of memory. The memories walk with her words, these tributary habits of words. Boot size history, lovers of cracked road. Here used to live the cobbler, there and there him and her. Did they die when they wanted to?

7

from millions of us
who scratch these scabs of ice or
chew on the haunting rings
of cockroach stomachs,

less sonorous than the upwelling
thrusts of hearts gurgling blood,

smile corrosive smiles
smile and count how slowly the years have gone,

slowing years somewhere
in this night trembling together,
to have swallowed

a dry bone,
somewhere beyond this view
among the gushing floods of our expectations,

mouths agog
mouths drying up,

cuts in the stomach,
the phone that rings hunger in the stomach.

from contorted silences

as the sun skids
behind the clouds
shapes and shadows faint

some times I know that shadows lengthen with day.

indeed the shade I knew
did not stoop

like a red dripping cloud
imprinting shapes of terror
or whoosh away
to make way for a still born dawn.

with pieces in our hands

walking, walking walking–
there never was rivers
forming out of tap-dance teardrops
that have left us here,

the flowing puddles
runlets
follow
one another
from necropolis to necropolis
no longer wrapped
in grey's cerecloth stain

Of us who remain ready like a new stove
Of this bloom of petals and blood/pieces

the razor dreams, like a rat

shuffling in and out
my head's inside,

do like a rat
nibble
and blow cool breeze over the sores

like a long dry tale
with tentacles and things, suck strength
lock breath
staple scrotum to the thighs, how I walk
I carry my heads on my head and stalk,

through the clouds hugging and fondling each other

together we sang hard
onto sand forums, the going of a driest season.

Of the bloom of petals and blood,
fluttering fluorescent under a satellite
rainshower.

tick tick
and tick tock

we see behind the masks
behind the concrete shrouds, cotton wool words;

In a comedy of characters
when the buffoonery is done and curtains rend,
there were fingers to poke
at speeches of dead meat.

****

BENDE *(pacing vibrantly all over the stage):*

from refugeed

I come to you bruised and scabbed
but I come to you unshackled

I come to you clothed in dots and bloodclots
but I come to you anyway

forever and beyond, we
waited

now

we come to you when our tomb's unveiled
by a lifeless cortège

the day when earth and us
would embrace warmly never came
so

we come to you
knowing how our minds in cast and crutches
hobble about
their regular duties.

Ndramas *(walks over to* **Bende** *and talks with):*

to exit

TOM ORANGE

FLAME ABOVE THE SEAMARK

Gazing eagerly where above the sea-mark
Flame as fierce as the fervid eyes of lions
Half divided the eyelids of the sunset;. . .
—Swinburne

flame above the seamark
are already to think sun and sunset

said flame's fierceness likens to fervid lioneyes
now flame half divides eyelids these eyelids first

eyelids of the sunset possess or genitive part
sunset has eyelid's or is eyelid's

if the sun is eye as already fervid lioneyes, then eyelid's is sky
and earth visionlimits upper and lower

extinguish the sun is the slow blink of setting
its setting under in undergoing

yet flame half divide eyelids
divide them in half keeps them open

even when they closed are still divided by the horizon
or half divides is divides only partly not completely
halfdivided halfjoined

flame seamark above think mark see
sunspark hours already are to think
sun far and or force unset

flamefierce said to spark less mark
likens to further lioneyes fervid
now flame halfspark divides
eyes lid lest these eyelids mark first

above sunlit poses eyes
or mark poise think generate partitive
of sunset has of possess
eyelids part or iterative spark is

if the sunflame said spark is as already eyes or our fervid
mark lioneye's first eyelids then sky is
upperlimit visionspark lowerlimit earthmark
flamelimit halflid eyeabove thinksaid

extinguish mark the sun
first sealimits in the
fierce of slow
set blink of
less sun
is likens
as blinkset

its setting undermark
is above said going or
under flamepart slow underset
as sun unset fierce or far sunder

flamelit halfpart
lid yet eye
as divide under
eyefierce further

fervideye them
in halfkeep slow
above opensaid
visionlimitsunder.

when
evenclosed
stilldivide sunlimit
horizonsunder halfsunabove
partdivide visioneyes
joincomplete.

MARGARET ORBELL AND RICHARD KILLEEN

THE PRESENCE OF THE DEW

Dew is pure water that falls silently upon the ground at night, is seen shining in the early morning, then vanishes. Dropping from above, it brings together sky and earth; discovered at dawn, it joins night and day. In many parts of the world it has been believed, in differing ways, to be a sign of the presence of higher powers.

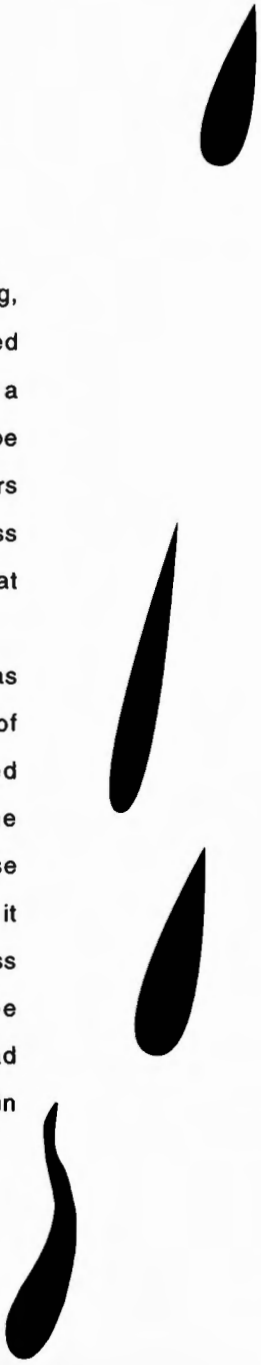
In Māori tradition, Rangi the sky and Papa the earth lay embraced in the beginning then were parted by their son Tāne. One writer tells us that the first parents still express their longing for one another:

Ināianei, kei te noho kē a Rangi i tana wahine, i a Papa-tūānuku, a, kei te mihi tonu te aroha a te wahine ki tana tāne; koia te kohu o ngā maunga e rere na ki runga. Ka ringitia hoki ngā roimata e Rangi ki runga ki a Papa-tūānuku, koia te haukū.[1]

Rangi now lives apart from his wife Papa-tūānuku, and the woman's love keeps greeting [mihi] her husband; it is the mountain mist that rises up above. And Rangi's tears are poured out over Papa-tūānuku; they are the dew.

The word mihi refers here to a greeting, often involving tears, which expressed love and longing and acknowledged a relationship with a person who might be present or at a distance. Rangi's tears as he returns Papa's greeting express his grief and are a loving message that renews their relationship.

It is not known whether the dew was always thought to be Rangi's tears of greeting; beliefs may have varied somewhat in different parts of the country. But coming from the sky, those tapu heights where there is no death, it was in any case believed to possess life-giving powers that could be summoned in ritual. If a woman had given birth and her milk was slow in coming, a karakia asked for dew:

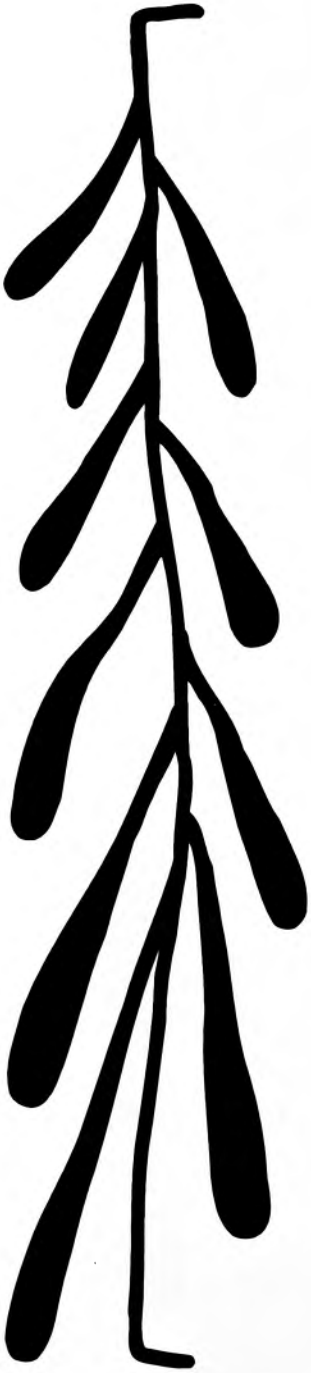


Ngā puna i runga te hōmai,
te ringia ki te matamata o ngā ū o tēnei wahine,
Te kōpata i te rangi te hōmai,
hei whakatō mō ngā ū o tēnei wahine[2] . . .

Give well-springs from above,
poured on the nipples of this woman's breasts,
Give dew from the sky
to fill this woman's breasts . . .

The mother and her child would be kept apart for a whole night while the dew was falling. Then her breasts would fill with milk and the baby would be brought to her.

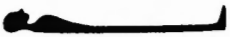
And the dew, as we learn from laments [waiata tangi], came also at the end of a person's life. This did in fact happen, for generally at a funeral the person mourned lay for some days and nights on a marae, exposed to the dew. But in one respect these passages in laments are not in accord with reality as we would now experience it: although dew is heaviest on windless nights, the poets speak of dew as borne on the wind. Apparently a slight movement of air, or perhaps an imperceptible one—a breath of air not felt by the mourners—was thought to bring the dew.[3]



In this respect and in others, the traditional Māori experience of wind was very different from our own. Language, as so often, indicates a close association of ideas. Although the word hau has a number of applications and can be translated accordingly as 'wind,' 'breath' or 'dew,' it is clear that these concepts were often inseparably related.[4]

While wind in itself—wind with no dew—was believed in many other circumstances to bring with it a message (often, a mihi) from a person living at a distance,[5] dew-bearing winds are mentioned only in laments for the dead. Sometimes such a wind comes from the land rather than the sky.[6] In a well known waiata tangi, a poet mourning a relative, Raukura, names a place from which it blows:

Iri mai, Raukura, i runga te puhirere.
Ka tōkia to kiri e te anu mātao,
E ngā hau whakahoki nō roto nō Kainoke[7] . . .



Lie up there on the platform, Raukura.
Your skin is bedewed by the bitter cold,
The winds that answer from within Kainoke . . .

In these laments the poets usually speak of the coldness of the dew, and this must have been associated with the coldness of the body. In the cold night, a cold message is sent.[8] But where was Kainoke, and whose was the message borne on the wind?

Because Māori poets move swiftly from one idea to another, most passages of this kind are short and, to modern readers, cryptic. But one waiata tangi, by an unknown poet, is centrally concerned with the significance and powers of the dew:

Taku tira wahine

Taku tira wahine, taku tira kahurangi,
Ka moe i te kino. Moe mai, e hine,
Moe mai, e hine, i roto i te waka iti.
Ka tōkia tō kiri te anu o te whenua—
Ko 'e hau tuku mai, ē, ko 'e hau tuku iho
I runga o ngā puke kai ō mātua, ē,
Kai ō tūpuna e moe noa mai rā—
Te tini o te tāngata, te tini o te tāngata!
Hoki mai, e hine, kia hurihuri au, ē,
Kia hurihuri au tō kiri rauwhero.
Kia whakarewaia, ē, kia whakarewaia, ē,
Tō uru māwhatu ki te wai māori, ē,
Ki te wai māori nā ō tūpuna.
Ka tohia iho koe rā, ī, ka tohia iho koe
Te tohi o Uenuku. Taku manu tangi ata, ē,
Taku manu tangi ata, ka moe i te hau.
Ka riro ki raro rā, ē, ka riro koutou,
Ka wehe ki te mate rā ī.[9]

My woman traveller

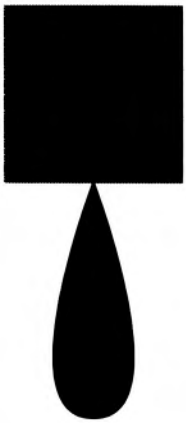
My woman traveller, my precious traveller,
Sleeps in an unhappy state. Sleep, girl,
Sleep, girl, in the small waka.
Your skin is bedewed with cold from the land,
A wind come towards us, a wind come down
Over the hills from your elders,
Your ancestors who all are sleeping there—
The multitude of men, the multitude of men!
Return, girl, so I can turn about,
So I can turn about your red-brown body.
Let them float, let them float,
Your curly locks in the fresh waters,
The fresh waters of your ancestors.
You are separated, you are separated
With the separation of Uenuku. My bird that sang at dawn,
My bird that sang at dawn, sleeps in the wind.
You have gone below, you have all gone,
Set apart by death.

The dead woman is a traveller because her wairua, her soul, is setting out upon its journey to Te Rēinga. As often happened, her body has been placed in a waka, a canoe; the small size of this vessel indicates its tapu nature.

The body is bedewed by a cold wind which, we are told, comes from the woman's ancestors, from the places—probably, hidden caves on a hillside—where their bones are lying. This must have been a general belief; Kainoke, in the passage quoted above, must also be a burial place. The spirits of ancestors were believed to visit their descendants on important occasions, taking different forms and often coming by night.

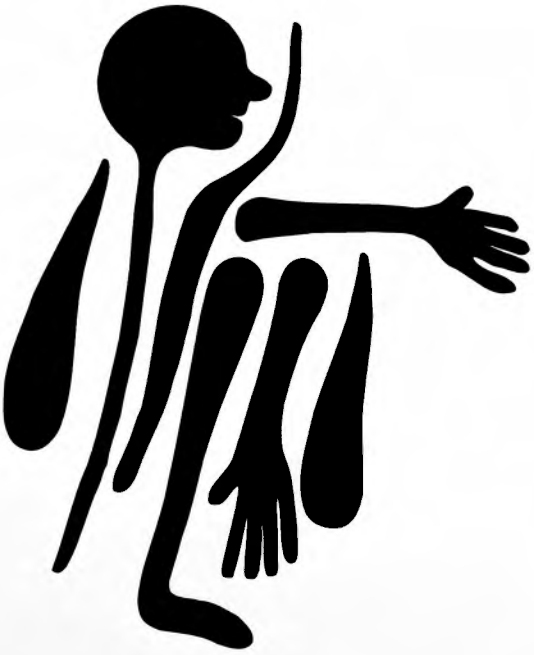
Next there is a reference to the ritual preparation of the body, when it was bathed and painted with red ochre. The poet refers to his or her involvement in the funerary preparations,[10] then speaks of the body's immersion in 'fresh waters' brought into existence by the ancestors.

These waters must be identified with the dew that has been spoken of earlier. The ancestors' mihi, their loving message, brings with it their presence and participation. They join the living in bathing and adorning the woman in preparation for her funeral and the journey that will follow.[11]



This ritual ablution appears to merge in the song with another ritual, also involving water, which is referred to immediately afterwards. At the wai tapu [sacred waters] possessed by every community, the tohi [separation] ritual was performed over infants to dedicate them to their future life: a boy to the arts of war and peace, a girl to gardening, weaving and other tasks.[12] The term tohi was used of this ceremony because it was performed some eight days after birth—at the time, that is, when the end of the umbilical cord falls away from a baby's navel. This was the final separation; the child was now fully of this world, and his or her social identity had to be ritually established. For this the father's presence was essential.

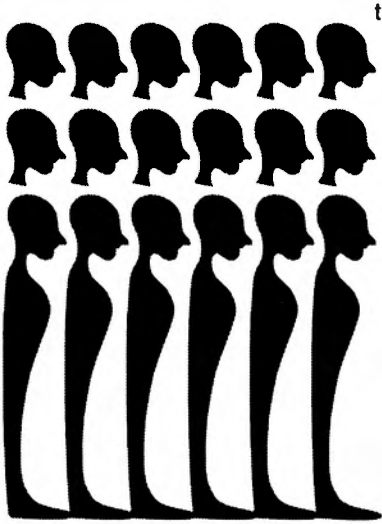
Subsequently another tohi ritual might be performed over a young man before his first battle, and sometimes also at a first meeting with a male relative of his father's generation (to confirm the nature of the youth's relationship with another of his pāpā, or 'fathers'). So while the term tohi referred initially to the infant's final separation from his or her state of existence before birth, it could also be used of a later dedicatory ritual.



This is how it is used here. 'Te tohi o Uenuku,' 'the separation of Uenuku,' must be a funerary ritual, or perhaps a saying quoted in a metaphorical sense; Uenuku in many traditions is a powerful god [atua]. In dying, the woman has assumed a different kind of existence and is parted from her relatives in this world. Her ancestors send the dew to define her new state and receive her into their midst, and to affirm at the same time their continuing relationship with the mourning relatives.

After praising and honouring the woman ('my bird that sang at dawn'), the poet speaks again of the wind that visits her in her last sleep. While this reference to the wind is an expression of grief, it is also a recognition of the woman's reception by her ancestors.[13]

In the last lines the lament becomes a general one. The poet mourns the absence of all whom death has taken below.



Notes

1. See Grey 1928:5. Papa-tūānuku is mentioned first in this passage because women were expected to take the initiative in expressions of aroha [love, longing].
2. Orbell 1978:74. The karakia, or ritual chant, was of course essential to the success of this ritual. The first line apparently refers to the dew rather than the rain.
3. One of the words, or expressions, for dew is haukū (hau kū). Since the word kū can mean both 'silent' and 'make a low sound,' the meaning of hau kū appears to be 'dew that is silent' or 'dew that makes little noise.' Hau kū may therefore be a term used of dew brought by a puff of wind that was barely apparent to the mourners, or perhaps imperceptible.
4. Perhaps there was always a relationship of some kind between these concepts. When dew is specifically meant, the word hau is often followed by an adjective, which may indicate the quantity of dew—as with hau kōpata, 'dew drops,' hau rahi and hau nui, 'heavy dew,' and hau rutu, 'dew poured out.' All such expressions are treated by Williams (1971) as single words and their full meanings are not given.
5. A woman poet, for instance, might sing a song addressed to a distant lover when a wind blew from his direction.
6. Dew-bearing winds at funerals may in fact have always been believed to come from the land.

   Two pairs of expressions indicate the dual origin of dew. One pair is hau rangi and hau whenua, which mean respectively 'sky dew' and 'land dew'; the other is tōmairangi (tō mai rangi) and tōmaiwhenua (tō mai whenua), which similarly mean 'dew from the sky' and 'dew from the earth'. The full significance of this distinction is not known. On many other occaions the expressions employed do not indicate the origin of the dew.
7. Grey 1853:315.
8. If the translation of the word whakahoki is correct here, the person lying in state (with perhaps the mourners) is thought to have sent a message, and an answering message now comes from the wind.
9. Orbell 1978:46. The expanded treatment of this subject may be associated in some way with the very unusual pattern of repeated half-lines in this song.
10. This sacred duty is mentioned in a number of laments, by poets who may refer to the face or hair and who sometimes speak of a ritual ablution. In a Hokianga song (McGregor 1898:27), these words are addressed to a relative mourned:

    Ka huri mai ō mata ngā wai e rere
    I roto Te Wairoa. Ko te wai tēnei i tukua iho ai
    Tō kiri rauwhero, tō mata raunui
    Nāku i miri iho, kia pai atu koe te haere ki raro rā.

    Your eyes will turn to the falling waters in
    Te Wairoa—
    Those are the waters in which were immersed
    Your red-brown body and your broad face—
    I was the one who painted them, so you would look
      well on your journey below.

    Here the bathing is understood as involving immersion in water, apparently in a place of special significance (although the body was probably not literally immersed, but washed with water taken from there). It is not known whether these tapu waters were always associated specifically with ancestors.

11. The word tokia,'bedewed' or 'anointed', can refer both to the bedewing of a body and its painting with red ochre (also, in other contexts, to the painting of a living person). Despite the dictionary definition (Williams 1971:428), this is not an ordinary term meaning 'moisten, wet' but was apparently used in these contexts only.
12. For the wai tapu, see Johansen 1958:20–63. Many rituals were performed at this site; although it is not known whether water for bathing the dead was taken from there, or whether a separate stream or spring was used exclusively for this purpose. For the tohi ritual see Te Rangi Hiroa 1950:494–95 and Johansen 1958:21–24.
13. This expression 'ka moe i te hau,' 'sleeps in the wind,' occurs in a number of waiata tangi, usually without any elaboration that would serve as an explanation. The present song provides an explanation of its meaning.

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MEREDITH QUARTERMAIN

HUMAN INFUSORIA

Suppose we speak of little.
Tell this
cast from fire.
Spell

spare
all polar
sound. Suppose a thing
speaks, in every way
real, of
the imperceptible
ease
in passing. Prison or mole
embryo else,
sing scant and scraggy an

echo's compass.

Next littleness of education, smallness and its
lack –
this picture men compare so they
cavern with a long Lilliputian

epitome, necks in respect
vanishing to the light in their legs.
Conceive them thinness fettered puppets,
our nature, pygmy, as having an experience as
remain homunculus.
Picture further a cock
at sparrow-selves above the wall.
Insect the wall. Fly others silent.
Wrought midges gnats and
shrimps. Distance

implements.
Human infusoria and shapes

turn small a fire, millet
above road,
barley, all corn
of animals, of every sand, of mole
speak to begin. Men would
hold their fragment
of
geography
to scope the cave
they scale unmoved through.

MARTHE REED

PLACE

1
Place where they rested. Wet (wetland). Where water rises in winter. Reed lake, reed bed. Filled (with) reeds. Place. And frog song(frogs). Banjo frogs. Late. Late afternoon sound, spring sound: when the wind blows only gently. (Where they rested). Banjo song. *T'onng, t'onng.* ("What's that?") Where the water rises. (Reed bed, reed) lake. Lake Badgerup. What? Noongar word. Water (word). Where they rested. Place. *T'onng.* Banjo frog. Where the sound rises up out of the lake underneath the wind. Gently, when the wind.

2
Hoeing. Scuffling the earth. (Sand. Karakatta Dunes). Tiny brown snake, yellow and black banded snake. Newly formed snake scuffles out from (under) the hoe. And back. (Into) the ground. Out of the light. Scuffling into the light. Tiger snake, brown snake. Dugite. Yellow and black banded snake lifted out of the sand. Hoe. (Tiny) four-inch snakes which last spring drowned in the carp pond. Lily food. Rescued (one). One let go in the tall grass. Rye grass, winter(rye). Meal for a bigger snake (territorial). Or a magpie. Mag. Out of the light. Karakatta sand. Hoeing lantern grass among the leschenultia. Blue.

3
Keening like seagulls. Black. Black cockles sweep over the house on the edge of the storm. Weather coming. (White) cockatoos, black with white spots on their tails. Cockatoos. Ten or thirty, two hundred. Swoop and sweep of black wings and tails, keening. Gliding on thermals over the roof.

Keening(like) storms. Light a(light) in the dead tops of jarrahs. We (stop), spell-bound by their wheeling. Thirty-five year old birds, ancient venerable birds. Nesting lands dozed to wheat. Black. Black cockies squabbling (gently), squabbling. Almonds and lemon-scented gums, remnants of pine plantations: feeding along the coast.

4

Teleological. (Telos). Aeolian soils, wind-carried. Candlestick banksia, matchstick banksia. Logopoeia. Wind-lifted sand. Bone (white), and mustard. Sand. Aeolis. Where trees. Sheoke, matchstick banksia. Bull banksia. Are fourteen metres down and four metres up. Where cockatoos gather. Candlestick banksia, bull banksia, jarrah. Kangaroos drowse in their shade. Drowse amid melaleucas (shade). Paper barks, aeolian trees. Wind-tossed (trees). Down and up, drowse. Banksia bush and balgas: fire-formed bush. At the edges. Telos. Of development (subdivisions, market) gardens. Garden. Balgas and melaleucas. Down and up.

LISA ROBERTSON

TWO POEMS

ESSAY ON THE ORIGIN OF OUR LANGUAGES

We learned in the inestimable
Salons of mom's syllables that the first
Invention of speech is due not to the
Needs but to the passions.

And pulling on our nylon
Nightie in the dark, we thought
Was the first language figurative
Wreathed

In blue spark?
Then recalled the distinctive
Characteristics of each garment
As the changes it must have

Undergone: the scabby and
Puckering darns on the little tights
Where our knees had hit the
Sidewalk, thus

Cultural work was done.
The wash hung
We talked
Of the formation

The formation of paper-sounds
In her ice-yellow cocktail rustle

Since our liveliest sensations often
Welled up by way of describing.

But why extend the illusion of passivity?
Fear is not harmful
But illuminates
Our mouth

So the latin-knit imagination can speak
Of sequins, of apricots; Utopia also
Some weightless errand caught in these letters.
We're telling you about things we don't remember–

Things like light passages, long and pleasant galleries and
    well-contrived turnings
Diverse porches and patios and awnings
As the orange lights of the city
Multiply beneath

A group of birds which
Appears to be pulled upwards as if
By strings
We try each thing, to test its gravity–

Most are not free enough.
The problem of the weight
Of choice
Escapes.

And speech is memory fattening
To russet then paling to flush when it
Bursts before falling as whiteness on parked cars.

ESSAY ON PLACE

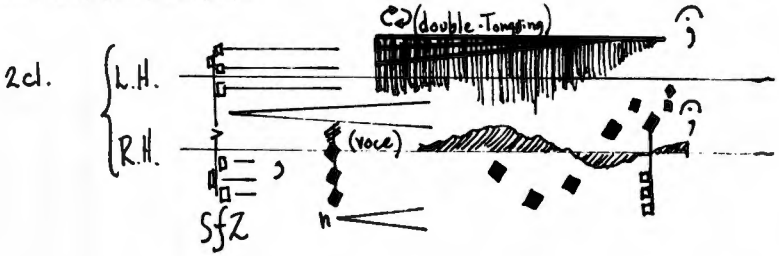
We went, we returned. We went; we returned. We went: we returned. Now place softens to become the lining of the mouth. Our older relatives are gone now and are half dreaming us into our mouths. Now a rocket of words bursts from our teeth. It is their violent no-image coined or seen by dying. Now we climb into our dress, our dress of more shape. Now we sew ourselves into air. There are people who donate faces and tongues. Maybe they are the older relatives. Now we run our fingers over their fingers and eyelids and are startled into humility. Now sequins we've burst too from the terrestrial emotional surface. We can't understand cloth, home, anything. Are we here to say we can't sustain this register? Now we can't yet participate in lost death. We must get into this soft lining. Now we were born complex, messy, willful, doubled, into tables and postcards and mats. Our faces now model themselves outwards towards ourselves. Now we have or own a shelf. We need it or don't. All the memory stretches out in a continual thin plane. Our faces keep reading it. Now place signs dirty water, plants, coins, unraveled stuff. All the memory is false therefore necessary. We're speaking for the air in the shape-filled cities, the air of the black branches, the objects covered in string, the smudged paper against the metal fence, some spatial confusion which replaces love. Now we move gently as the prepositions. What is communicate? Deep in our body it is better than this. Deep in our doubt a terrestrial clicking. Now we wish to be in one place yet move like blackbirds.

CATRIONA STRANG WITH FRANÇOISE HOULE

from THE CLAMOROUS ALPHABET

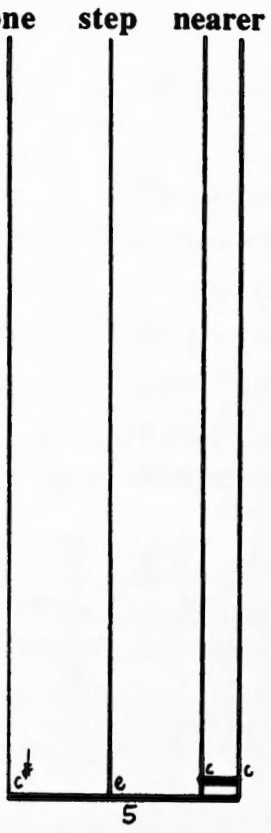
ADAGE

sure enough, we'll lung
all sudden sudden – and should
our injudicious haggle
a hope's rust, well,
what's haggle?
and might my driftless
fob the industrious?



NECK

or all is naught, as usual:
and this disparate exceptional
grooves our crop.
Nope, a civic
nape – all skimps
suck. Who
could thrive? . . . . .segue



PANIC

If, in all probe, which any haste
owes – I think I duped
my need back

OSCILLATE

especially in vineyards

nip-kiss

roaming, or like a coast, rumped

LISS

as an unwavering
all fascicled through perfunctory, each
and all my quicksand various

I would never not from

HAVE

gradually, by leveling

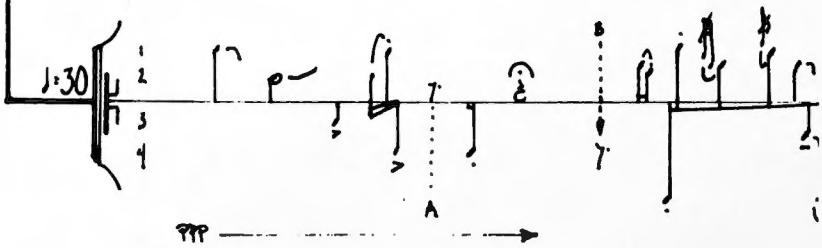
as in, such sentiment$_{A}$

can only be fortuitous

it will not

fix me$_{B}$– this last

will never hold$_{B}$



HAND

and ran along

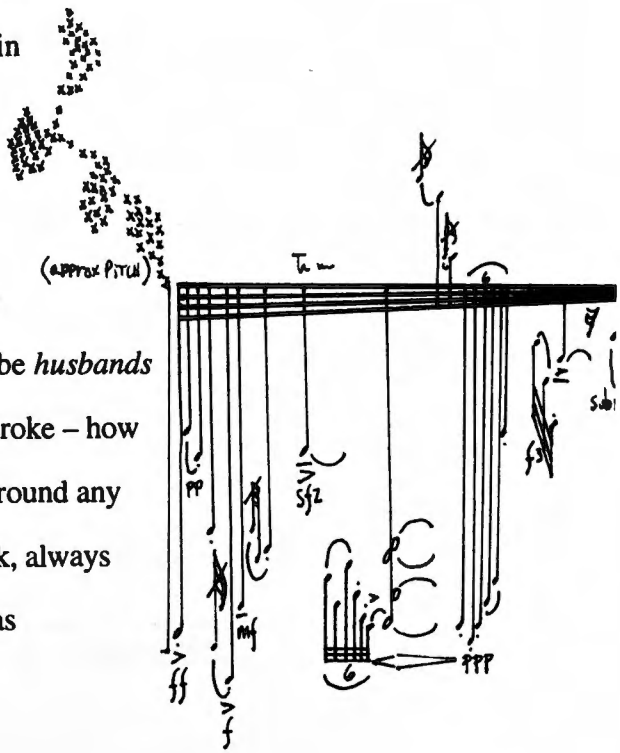
these lines: so fettered labour's bargain

jobs a skilled round

(and is no bargain

but indigent

and On Sale)



Lobbed, or over

or slyly, or maybe *husbands*

terminal steep stroke – how

the sharp pluck round any

eager little knack, always

yet now ever was

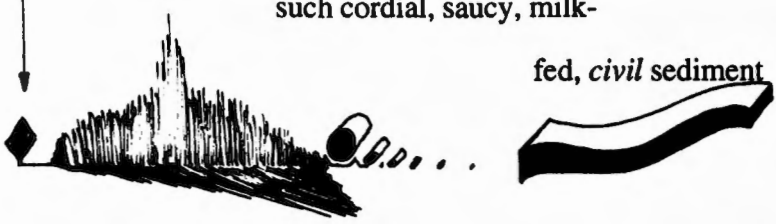
DRINK

whose will's

indomitable, yet

such cordial, saucy, milk-

fed, *civil* sediment



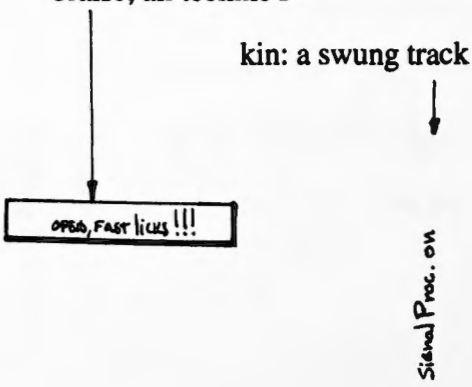
indeed so tender

so ever-

seethed; our sturdy

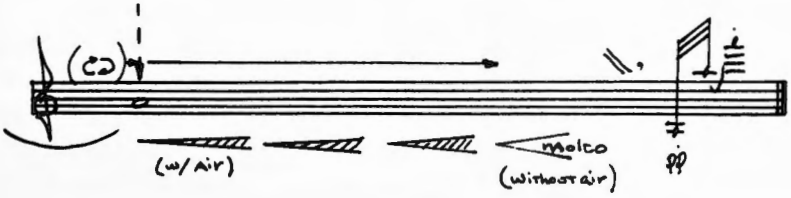
braise, all technic's

kin: a swung track



APT

All-pinioned
this importunate
nip-off: solitude
lasts, gloved
unruly, a furrowed
griller's glaring – *Who speaks of furrows?*
Who wilts anonymous liberties?
Who hollers "suspect appetite"
beguiles the typically-rendered unrecorded
flaunts their own respite, yearns
verbatim?



DANCE

||:funking coil:|| 16x pan L→R→L r: 20" *

avid, fatal

Aux 2 Right r: 15"

Aux 1 Left r: 30"

a little light lithe

an out-stretched

implant:

hip's coagulation

Aux 1 Left to Right r: 15" 3x

hat's prank

heady fleet

a limb's turn might

* See notes for Frozen Eye "Les Pas Perdus"

JAMES TAYLOR

AMBIGUITY AS A BOWL OF MILK

Their valence
or their ambi-
sexualities
who're of no
interest.

'We'll meet,'
they say & I'd
rather not. Yet
their invitations
& the tail-chops. . .

fodder & canon
matter—a bowl
of maggots or
three strips of
haloed cheese.

Well met by
these ordinancies—
their pluck &
offal total de-
relictions from duti

ful sons or
maxi mal mis
tresses. Bore me
their stuck cups
and crystalline

champagne flutes.
Fat bastard-of-
the-bush ballads
right wing para
noid nutters sup

their chow, eat their
bland curds & crack.
O up on sails of
others they'll wrestle;
talking junkets,

preferring their damp
hands & tired flesh.
These are the hole
some caretakers
of your tradition.

Uch *austral felix.*
Pallid syntaxes
of(f) the land.

MERVYN TAYLOR

TWO POEMS

THE LIGHTHOUSE AT POINT GALERA

You have to bend when you reach
the last landing, then you can straighten up
as you step into the sunlight and look out over
the rail, the sea spray almost reaching this high,
the road going at an angle between the grass and
the coconut palms, as if a child had drawn it,
the isle of Tobago way out and gray, ashen
from lying in the water so long. The children
scream to hear how it echoes in the stairwell.
The keeper tells them they are too many
but they climb anyway. He looks too young
to know the rocks, to warn any ship or spot
a squall rising. Two boys sit near the turret
where the light flashes, and mimic the whistle
of local birds, everyone craning his neck, unbelieving.
Next year it will be one hundred years since they
built this tower, and you can think of many ways
to commemorate the anniversary: a coat of paint,
a concert by the sea, an old salt speaking
in a recorded voice how, on such and such a night,
in the middle of his life, he swam from another island,
the light from Point Galera bringing him in. They are
all his offspring in these parts, too tired as he was
to move further inland. Or you can tell your own story,
how you always land by plane, and never saw this place
before, and that you believe the nun, that her habit is
in the trunk of her car, that the great swimmer was
her father.

A MISTAKE

for Robert Hass

I realized as he walked away I had
misspelled the name of the poet
as he did mine.

He had undertaken the job as caretaker
of his country's eloquence, in charge
of its rhymes, its superstitions
in the year of the most stars pitched,
most children abused, the highest

incidence of hurricanes, till the alphabet
spun like a wheel, the hardest hit
being the Caribbean where he went

measuring the leap of flying fish
as they lodged like straws in tree trunks.
It was the year when Haiti's fire
went out and the ash of the cane smudged

the face of an island as far away as
Trinidad, the pitch hardening on nights
never so cold before. I dreamt I was
floating in the Gowanus where Brooklyn
runs out to sea.

This northern California sea-writer
cursing the sadness of the anemone
saw the mistaken 'a' in his name
as I spotted the 'i' in mine.

We had played a kind of hangman
they still play in the Americas,
early in the morning, as soon as
the sun comes up over the wreckage.

JOHN TRANTER

TWO POEMS

SONGLINES

The rendezvous—did I miss it? I hear a lonesome
whistle—after the gust of miscalculation
steered back on track, leaves publish
quaint borsalino eloquence as today
becomes tomorrow—some paralysis, some

gesture of reproach: 'fuck you!'
the real point of which lies in the gap,
the translation from dim intent to
'that's obvious!' to retrospective explanation—
reverse subjunctive—'he would have meant. . .'

then the story of mankind, the babbled
speech in the kitchen—one more whisper,
one less problem to deal with out back,
on the plain of arbitration that stretches
into the haze, distant, finally rocking,

endless adjustments, until the parcel of hesitation
is wrapped up, the way a board meeting
winds down, go home, lights out, lock up,
yet is not explained by the minutes
a troubled secretary attempts to transform into

a final justification for the nature of evil
growing out of an absence of positive good,
that is, it's your fault—who else? for

growing up into something damaged,
not at all what the relatives expected.

What did they insist on at the school assembly?
How the little bracket fits to the left, how
you must be silent at the back of the class.
The song lines—hear them moaning
behind the wind from the sea as it groans

over the beach and up into the hills—
the four-dimensional arrays of speech extend from
the bandstand to the knot of quarrelling drunks
in the dark and their chorus of grief blotted out.
The dog didn't bark, to give him a nature,

and thus explained everything, but only
to the smart guy. Now the moon
with slow sad steps ascends its tower
while a pale nothing is spoken above
the silent clearing: a few couples look up,

remembering a misspent childhood, and
an awful noise begins, a clattering
that clambers up over the horizon—
we've left the sobbing secretary behind—
loaded with a kind of message, a porridge

of popular music and bad news announcements
and always the weather at three-minute
intervals—and now I remember what the city
looked like, back then—glorious—meet me
at the station, honey, don't be late.

SERIAL NUMBERS

And tell the truth—the tumult of various expendable
business plans, and the evening blinked in like a landing jet,
apparently graceful, in fact screaming nuts and bolts—
shaking metal plus desire equals travel industry bond
finance downturn explains his desperation—

he never got over the way his father hated him,
and shook a fist at himself in the mirror, rushing out
to join his pals at a gathering, cheese and wine
and social exchanges a whirling confetti—for a moment
the pack of snarling gibbons recognised something simian

about the crowd at the book party, their embraces
heartfelt yet somehow insincere—talent
given muscle by a bicycle pump, show biz
slang and chatter bouncing off the plexiglass—
model twaddle, chop throttle, sling hash and babble—

there—I don't remember a thin Singaporean
speaking gently into the handset about the banking
teletype network linking the island republic
to a pit of treasury dread in Yokohama—banknote
suction whirlwind—the old investment managers

fuck up due to lack of basic training in futures hedge
management—chattering over the sherry in between
profit and loss is not the safety rope,
he'd chosen to be an alcoholic, heavily crinkled,
a choice made up of thousands of little weaknesses

day by day, wearing down the rock of his self-esteem.
The young professors traded gossip and influences
I had lunch with Mister Hartford—oh, really?—just
lunch?—like kids with cigarette cards and pictures of Batman
when they should be practising their knots and lanyards.

Now the secret no one talks about–lack of talent.
You see? Dead quiet. Her suit was a fashion
gesture, while the quay water alfresco wavelets
wobbled through those long railing antlers, bracket,
I mean, slicing up the light into vertical samples,

each related to the one parallel, drawing energy
from each other, a team of singing brothers–
one dollar smells like its sibling in the wallet–print,
print–there's a ferry wandering and churning the surface
now sprinkled with rain. The thunder there

was hypnotised–widespread, miniature, far ranging–
flattering the city with dreams of a distant time
when everything was hunky-dory and a hamburger
was something to get excited about. Not the saxophone,
not the forgotten instruments, the cowbells

across the evening pastures, shit on the boots,
or the dew like crystal points on the morning radio
news traffic report not needed here, no traffic,
nothing happens in this town that God don't
know about–he's dreaming it, and we're Him.

DARREN WERSHLER-HENRY

from THE DANGEROUS PREVALENCE OF IMAGINATION: A TAPEWORM

So, reader, *you're holding in your hands, as often happens, a book the author did not write*, although a world participated in it. And what does that matter?

Signs, symbols, impulses, falls, departures, relations, discords, everything is there to bounce up, to seek, for further on, for something else.

Between them, without settling down, the author grew his life.

Perhaps you could try, too?

—Henri Michaux

for Liz

in the laminar flow andor litter a keyboard with millet seed where exotic songbirds will tap out prose andor poems formed by a core sample drilled through an encyclopedia stack andor cluster the letters pressed on a platen as stalactites grow on the home key row from a drip overhead in a limestone cave andor reconstruct the ruins of a bombed-out capital i andor reproduce the canonic works of western art as a series of road sign glyphs andor commission a painting of marcel duchamps large ass andor build a concrete poem of the absence that formatting codes for computers leave as they

jerk the print head over the paper while tape decks record the squeal and lurch as occasional music for cello or voice andor construct a poem acknowledging that words are four dimensional objects in time andor write an essay on the collected works of jane austen as a tour de force lipogram that never once makes use of any characters in the sinhalese alphabet andor escape from a paragraph by eloping along slightly bottomless discourses andor point out that the super mario world video game is actually a complex digital allegory for the writings of terence mckenna andor pen a treatise for andre breton and philippe soupault on the magnetic fields that vowels emit to shape the consonants cling to the page like clusters of tiny iron filings emphasizing the letter ys sometime electromagnetic charge andor proceed according to a philosophy of whatever andor insert chapbooks into the newspapers in vending boxes on the street andor do it even more than usual andor learn everything you can about the life of cervantes and then rewrite don quixote from the point of view of the windmills andor print a set of instructions for drycleaning pressing and patching the sacred shroud of turin andor build an object titled doctor williams in his dotage that consists of a small red wheelbarrow filled to the brim with depends brand adult disposable undergarments andor develop an ability not to push words in usual channels andor write a poem about the late john cage composed in 64 six line stanzas based on the chinese book of changes andor move them in and out of space andor design a camera that records its own presence andor a construe a word by word synonymic replacement for everything in finnegans wake and its sequel for casey from mister dressup andor look as little like a particular point of view as possible andor a compose a love poem called charged particles where each line is a single word ending in the suffix ion andor stick a stamp on your head then pull a mailbag over your head before you begin to recite andor work on a poem attempting to emulate gansers syndrome where a person responds to emotionally difficult questions with approximate or evasive answers andor address the united nations with your intentions andor write an encyclopedic novel about a whale but maintain throughout that it

is a fish rather than a mammal andor remove specifics and convert to ambiguities andor knowing that paisleys were at first fertility symbols from india that a small weaving town somewhere in scotland stole and began to use as their own suppose as an alternate history premise where indian castes instead developed a system of tartans and composed ragas for duos consisting of bagpipe and sitar andor type the words dylan thomas on a piece of paper but leave it on the platen and then submerge the entire typewriter in white liquid and call the resulting object underwood milk andor dial a number at random and talk your way into reading poems to whoever answers andor enrol names picked randomly out of the phone book into the book of the month club andor author a sound poem consisting solely of noises made by spin dryer full of glass eyeballs andor write each letter of a shakespearean sonnet on one of those little plastic paratrooper army men then throw them one by one from a balcony onto the audience below andor write a scatological parody of the milorad pavic novel a landscape painted with tea titled a landscape tainted with pee andor document whats going on in a room not necessarily but possibly the one youre in andor write a novel about what paul eluard did the year that he disappeared andor publish a guidebook for nonexistent monuments found well not found but you know what i mean somewhere in greater downtown toronto andor illustrate that this must be the case andor sandblast the scrawled missives of schizophrenics onto sheets of coloured glass in church windows andor spell it according to a phonetics of your own devising andor start a pataphysical software company andor write with your bones dry and distant andor imagine a poem called ideas for poets consisting of short metaphoric descriptions of the personalities of real or imagined poets where christopher smart might be a thin one smelling of vegetable crates and catfood forever patrolling the sidewalks edge andor avoid the habits of another artist andor fill a suitcase or steamer trunk full of it and let your friends edit it while you sleep off the drug of your choice andor make a western about the group of seven starring yul brynner as emily carr andor write along the edges of your manuscripts collated pages the

way you used to write on the edges of the pages of your math book and then shuffle the pages before you bind them andor write haiku noting that stonehenge is actually a circle of big pi symbols made out of rock andor make it unlimited massproduced obtainable by all and eventually producible by all andor remove random keys from your typewriter before you begin to write then forget which ones youve removed andor write with your head between your hands andor posit a time travelling character in a novel who first appears at its end and proceeds backwards to its beginning as a series of non sequiturs andor smoke your manuscript page by page when you run out of rolling papers andor visualize whirled peas andor sell the designs that appear after trickling a thin stream of sand onto a computer graphics tablet andor write a sonnet about what a grecian earns andor look closely at the most embarrassing details and amplify them andor write a brief history of television including platos myth of the television the television at lascaux the york and townley mystery televisions shakespeares globe television and the first steam driven television andor write with the tips of your eyes and holding back in advance andor tell the story of the night that vladimir ilyich lenin finally went across the street to the cabaret voltaire to see what was causing all the goddamn noise andor write a treatise on the physics of luggage calculating the difference between volumes of air displaced by a clean shirt ironed and folded and by the same shirt when dirty andor letterbomb the city of paris ontario with it andor punch holes through every copy of the bound book andor replace sigourney weaver with jacques derrida and make a film about him chasing hegelians through the air ducts of a space ship with a flamethrower andor soak your hair in japanese calligraphic ink and drag your head down a long paper scroll andor treat grant applications as a creative act andor write extended marginal comments or possibly subtexts on a movie with a pinhead and magnifying glass in the black space that surrounds each frame andor dont and see if i give a fuck andor consider the implications of letters being the fossilized remains of small animals and hypothesize what several million years of evolution might produce as the descendants of such

animals andor write without your fingers blushing andor use rain damage as title for a neurology textbook that has been repeatedly left outside during thunderstorms andor detourne the berenstain bears childrens books by replacing all text with material from charles bernsteins a poetics andor write with inane but appropriate naivete andor theorize the written page as a prepared cross section of something biological andor wonder why there are no christian jubes buddhist jubes or muslim jubes andor break the rest of these up andor explore the possible applications of artificial stupidity andor stage the skinhead hamlet with real skinheads andor work on the beginning for a while andor smear your hand and your friends hand with spaghetti sauce paint semen or cyprine and shake hands through a piece of paper andor pile everything thats not nailed down onto the platen of your scanner andor write under the pomegranates andor contradict yourself for you are vast and contain multitudes andor use finishing nails to form the overall outline on a wall and then hang your words from them andor play a game of battleship by plotting moves according to letters read in order of their appearance in poems by siegfried sassoon and f t marinetti andor make it bigger andor speculate on the whereabouts of the lost portrait of alfred jarry painted by aubrey beardsley andor write a poem about sir isaac newton in your normal handwriting on an apple newton and let it translate for you andor react against the laziness of railway tracks between the passage of two trains andor document your participation in an illegal activity then render the document nearly but only nearly illegible through the application of artistic means before you show it andor write so as to make a hollow andor cover a refrigerator with poems written in fridge magnets copied from the food section of steins tender buttons and fill the contents of the fridge with the corresponding comestibles andor humanize the parts that are free of error andor write poems that consist of nothing but punctuation marks andor keep changing andor write on yellowing velvet andor vomit alphaghetti onto the page as a homage to bob rauschenberg and jubal brown andor title a story the fall of the house of escher andor think of the souvenirs without nostalgia andor

COMMENTARY

Shifting Homeland: Viewing the Post-Pastoral Subject in John Kinsella's *The Radnoti Poems*

While a relatively small volume, *The Radnoti Poems* (Equipage, 1996), marks an important moment in Kinsella's career, namely his transference from the rural and fairly isolated region of his Western Australian birthplace to Cambridge, perhaps one of the most privileged sites of the English-speaking world. This shift from colonial margin to centre has challenged poetic perspective, forcing not only a negotiation of Australian space and European tradition, but also a re-appraisal of Kinsella's own relation to Australian versions of pastoral. In Australia, pastoral poetry has been integrally tied to a discourse of nationhood, of asserting and affirming the ties between person and place. Given the violent backdrop of its history, the relationship of many white Australian writers to the land is usually one of ambivalence and anxiety. As Ivor Indyk wrote, "It is the land, his natural environment, which gives the pastoral poet the material for his songs, yet here pastoral achieves its greater power precisely in circumstances where the poet's relationship to his land is threatened and uncertain"(116).

With the publication of *The Silo: A Pastoral Symphony* in 1995, Kinsella gained a reputation as one of Australia's foremost contemporary pastoral poets. Yet, Kinsella himself is uneasy with the tag, viewing his writing as more anti-pastoral than pastoral. He argues that while Australian rural poetry might be pastoral in mode, much of it has a Georgic undercurrent which is didactic and seeks to control its subject("Notes" 33). Early colonial figures like Henry Kendall "not only imitated English verse but retained an English way of seeing landscape"("Towards" 94). Certainly, *The Silo* may be read satirically, implicitly critiquing the values of cultivation, property, and possession that ground pastoral attitudes. The pastoral imaginary that fills the landscape with fields of wheat or cattle, as well as iconic signs of human dominion—the silo and the homestead—is far from benign in Kinsella's

eyes. The entrenchment of such images in the Australian psyche encourages a blindness to the environmental realities of soil erosion, salinity problems, and land degradation. For suburbanites, the countryside is someone else's concern. The sense of non-involvement is driven by the presumption that, unlike wilderness, countryside is tended and overseen. Kinsella's poetry foregrounds how such ideology still informs our notions of nature and aesthetics, and distances us from an ethics of care. It reassesses the innocence of such idealism, as well as it role in constructing a sense of Australian identity or "homeland".

Anti-pastoral, then, in message, Kinsella still turns to pastoral forms for his telling. As he stated in a recent article, his writing "is a rejection not of frameworks but of contents. It recognises frames for what they are: empty shells. . .my Trojan Horse theory—get inside and dismantle"("Brief" 106). In this respect, his poetry is best viewed as post-pastoral or meta-pastoral, in that it critiques pastoralism from within. Tone and usage comment on one another in a reciprocal relation. Some critics like Andrew Ettin have argued that this is not unusual for pastoral as it can hold both the rare and the common, the simple and the complex in delicate simultaneity. He suggests that pastoral literature flourishes in times of artistic experimentation and debate, precisely because it can embody cultural and moral tensions(105). The idyllic Golden age so often described in pastoral literature may function ironically, or comment upon contemporary interactions with the land. It is therefore able to be read at various levels of sophistication and purpose. In evolving according to historical circumstance, it follows that pastoral modes might be challenged and reshaped under the pressures of late modernity. Kinsella's poetry presents the pastoral subject under crisis, negotiating cultural identity while fearing the loss or hold of such position. His writing "is not an ideolectical poetry that replaces certain demarcations, borders, divisions, qualifications. In some sense, it highlights those separations"("Brief" 106).

In *The Radnoti Poems*, Kinsella specifically borrows from and pays homage to Miklós Radnóti (1909-1944), one of twentieth-century's most innovative pastoral poets. Joining together dissimilar or diametrically opposed ideas, Radnóti's work reveals a flexibility and power that recalls the charge of Osip Mandelstam and Paul Celan. Writing before and during World War Two, Radnóti would use classical forms to create firstly a poetry of dissidence, and then of witness. Although a native Hungarian, his Jewish background would mean that Radnóti was unable to teach and had his own poetry censored. He turned instead to translating, reading deeply into African oral culture and translating writers such as Guillaume Apollinaire, Henry de Montherlant, and Jean

de la Fontaine. With the advent of war, he would be interned in a series of labour camps until the final months of the war, when he was forced into a death-march and finally killed out of expedience by Hungarian troops.

There is much in Radnóti that would appeal to Kinsella, from his activism within Parisan intellectual circles of the thirties, to his relative youth (Kinsella would write *The Radnoti Poems* at roughly the same age as when Radnóti completed some of his best work, shortly before he died at thirty-five). Both would use other writers and artists as a focus for their own writing, creating sophisticated pastoral intertexts. Both would draw attention to the balance of power. Radnóti would provide an example of the poet who speaks out when others remain silent. Most significant, however, is the personal aspect, particularly Radnóti's experience of exile and dispossession that turned his attention continually to thoughts of "home." *The Radnoti Poems* are dedicated to Fifi, the more intimate name with which Radnóti addressed his wife in correspondence (elsewhere, she was known as Fanni). A number of Kinsella's poems are likewise dedicated to his partner, Tracy Ryan, who was then still in Australia.

In approaching Radnóti's writing, it becomes apparent that Kinsella is familiar with numerous translations and selectively moves between them. In one sense, *The Radnoti Poems* could be said to perform the function of mourning for a proficient and admired figure. At the same time, there is a desire to be admitted into Radnóti's company—according to Celeste Schenck, a defining characteristic of the pastoral elegy (15). Rather than simply appropriating Radnóti's poetry, Kinsella continues it in his own idiom and through the knowledge of more familiar landscapes. Entering into conversation rather than translation, he becomes a respondent to Radnóti's vision.

This is most clearly seen in "Calendar: a continuous narrative." Kinsella's epigraph, "Just look around. . .you'll see wonders" is the first line for the June section of Radnóti's own calendar sequence of poems (1942). Radnóti, in turn, had used *The Shepheardes Calendar* as his model, refashioning Edmund Spenser's long eclogues into brief vivid passages. Pastoral poetry is often distinguished by such dialogue or staging of community. The "you" that Kinsella addresses is primarily Radnóti: "Our year starts here, a dank/wet South, dust dry/ North. . ./ . . .But being/an inflection of *your* climate/ we'll remain as far under as possible"(32). Kinsella's series starts at June rather than January, foregrounding the inversion of seasons in the Northern hemisphere. Radnóti's "Calendar" is highly traditional, describing nature through man's interaction with it, and vice versa:

Look, the puddle goosepimples; March walks
under the trees with wild,
cheerful teenage-boy breezes,
and makes much noise.
Shivering bud hasn't yet shown his head,
nor has spider spun,
but already now baby chicks,
yellowish goldballs run (*Complete* 203).

Kinsella, on the other hand, shows how the calendar is "particular to location," recording specific incidents of cultural history. His version is far bleaker and more political than Radnóti's. September, for instance, sees the boat people "still incarcerated/in the Port Hedland/ Detection Centre" while the "Land Rights Claims/are choking." His attention turns to environmental crises such as the mining companies "doing deals/on the side" or "the oil brews/in the Timor Gap." Contrasted with this is the closing single image: "Among the peonies/and daisies/blue leschenaultia/is blooming"(33). Such an image seems out of place in relation to the rest of the series, in which the weather and land are described in harsh tones, even when presented through prosopopoeia. "December" reads:

Cyclone Frank is off the West Coast
and cyclone Emma is hitting Christmas Island.
That's North, but the fallout reaches you here
eventually. Sullen weather,
that threatens to jam
two climactic zones
together. On either side
of the degenerative low
it's stinking hot (34).

Against such passages, "you'll see wonders," begins to take on an ironic effect. The ancient pastoral tradition invoked by Radnóti seems out of place in Kinsella's Australia, even though in May the weather is deemed "Mediterranean." In enacting Arcadia down under, pleasure-seekers are shown to be in "denial" over the dangers of cancer, thieving flowers (specifically, the evocative "everlastings") for their city mansions, or sitting in beer-sodden disdain while bushfires threaten the wetlands. And as if parodying the European idyll, his version has the Nyungars (the true native people of the land) being "incarcerated for stealing the not so golden fleece"(35).

Another sequence which explores the translation of pastoral over the Pacific is "Aspects of the Pagan." The title alludes to Radnóti's "Pagan Salute" (reinforced by an epigraph from the latter). The sequence adheres to an elaborate form, where the last line of the stanza becomes the first line of the next, and each stanza has the standard fourteen lines of the sonnet. The last stanza of the five-part cycle has the end lines of the previous four as its final four. This rigidity of the poetic structure contrasts with the excess of sensuality contained within. Kinsella matches Radnóti's affirmation of eroticism and joy with the arrival of Spring by a further blossoming of lushness and lust. The opening passage refers to the "glades of Norman Lindsay" where women "with generous thighs" and names like "Abundia" and "Satia" might be seen to lead the pastoral motifs(19). Lindsay's Arcadia, a version of pastoral which emerged in Australia in the 1920s, is bawdy, bountiful, and "impervious to pricks." Leading a bohemian group surrounding the journal, *Vision*, Lindsay turned to Greek and Roman pastoral features as a way to resist the tendency towards disintegration and formlessness which he found in much modern art and literature. Yet, while its poetics were controlling, the poetry produced was neither predictable nor contained.

Kinsella suggests that the moral edge to Australian pastoral utopia has been "laboured" on by the "glossies" and television(21). Nature is so highly mediated through mass culture, that our "experience" of it is filtered, sanitised, and seemingly given order. Denoting a force which is eternal and inevitable, the "natural" becomes the cultural meaning *read into* nature. Yet such meaning is generally determined by those in a position of power. We become caught in a cycle of unreflective and ruthless consumption, similar to that of birdlife during harvest-time, when the summer grain passes from grassbird, to goshawk, to swamp harrier(20).

Radnóti would also be concerned with the politics of the gaze. In "Steel Chorus," he writes

> Oh, it was a great business, that war was!
> there never was a better!
> fat profits trickle!
> trickle! Oh, for this!
>
> Motherland stuffs her face with crispy colonies!
> Ivory Coasts, or India,
> or, if you please, Madagascar!
> If you wish, a negro boy screams toward you

whom the film producer bought from his tribe for a cheap
pip
and had a tiger tear to pieces!. . . .

oh, never fear for their dreams!
A square in Venice is what a citizen will dream of,
where he ate honeymoon
and fed the doves! (*Complete* 317)

For Radnóti, not only are war and imperialism driven by the profit motive, but romanticism provides an aesthetic justification. The expansionist ethic of Empire is presented as analogous to the film audience's consumption of images. Against such media technology, poetry seems like "an Elizabethan village showing/the old arts"(Kinsella 39). Spectacle replaces the ethical act of judgement. The dreams of doves and honeymooning—symbols of peace and love—figuratively and literally white-wash over acts of colonial violence.

In "Empire and Roundhouse," Kinsella continues Radnóti's focus on commerce and colonialism. The reduction of the colonised from subject to subaltern, however, is linked specifically to place, namely the effects of institutionalisation in the stone prisons of Empire. Fashioned along the lines of the panopticon, the Roundhouse was Western Australia's first gaol. Kinsella notes its dehumanising effects: "[I]t's hard too/to maintain a sense of humour/when you're chained/ sixteen in a twelve by six cell"(44). Now of aesthetic interest, the building's "stone art" still holds traces of the genetic "experiment" carried out within its walls. Like Radnóti's "O Ancient Prisons," the materiality of language ("langue and parole," the degrading of speech) is also part of this "stone art"—the poem itself a prison. Radnóti's poetry becomes a host or house for Kinsella, a possibility Radnóti recognised, "[I]mages noble and heroical,/which find their audience in measured breath—/how far away you are. Who dares to act/slides into empty void"(*Foamy* 98). As Radnóti realised, whoever enters the poem risks this loss of identity.

The division between an writing "I" and the written "I," (authority and inscription) is reinforced in "A Zone Essay on Prohibition and Purity, where Kinsella writes, "the I redefines its place/and splits itself as process"(46). The purity espoused by colonial ideology has a hidden "bricked in" underside of darkness and degeneration. This separation is made in concrete terms in the volume where the "I" is variously italicised, underlined or boxed. In this particular poem, Kinsella moves away from colonial concerns to an anti-pastoral vision of environmental degeneration. Here, there is "dehydration in the place where water

cannot be drunk/for purity's sake"(46). Current governmentation covers over the future vision of the nation–the "degenerate world lying in wait," in which forests have been destroyed by logging and the rest of the land is contaminated by hazardous chemicals, foxbait, and mining. The effects of such "boastful decadence" are forecast through Eastern European example: "Who owns what in whose memory: 'Now death/is blowing through the trees' reconstituted by rain"(47).

For Kinsella, over-cultivation is hidden by cultural memory, an environmental aesthetics which is distant rather than close up. The first poem, "Eclogue on an Aerial Photograph" paints a traditional farming scene, of a pilot, possibly a crop-duster, out labouring. The place of the poet is also out "fielding idylls," though here it is with the abstraction of "disembodied sight/lapsed into the past." His narrator looks back to a Golden age–there is even mention of the "crops brassy in sunlight." From the pilot's perspective, the picturesque landscape seems ideal. Yet, the word "brassy" is not quite golden, and the fields are rolling "out/of synch."

It is only in the second poem, "Field Glasses" that Kinsella offers a different reading of the same site, revealing the invisible amongst the visible:

> It's because this happens
> in absence, the larger movements
> as obvious as tractor marks
> in the muddy paddocks,
> or the wind furrowing channels
> in dry country: a kind of
> microcosm embellished, the invisibles
> glowing like monozite, the distance
> nothing(10)

Together, the poems recall one of Radnóti's most commemorated poems, "I know not what. . ." which also compares the distant view of the war pilot flying over unknown ground to that of the native:

> I know not what to strangers this dear landscape might
> mean,
> to me, it is my birthplace, this tiny spot of green. . .
>
> For him who flies above it, a map is all he sees,
> this living scape of being but symbols and degrees;. . .

what's hidden in the map? Yes, barracks, mills, and arms,
but for me crickets, oxen, steeples, quiet farms;
with field-glasses he marks the crops and industries,
but I, the trembling laborer, the forest trees,
the twittering orchards, vineprops with their tended
grapes,. . .

the pilot cannot see that paving-stone, that grass:
to see all this, there is no instrument or glass
(*Foamy* 96-97).

This last line could be translated as the epigraph Kinsella uses to his second poem, "there is not device to reveal such things with accuracy"(10) In Kinsella's period, the surveillance is by Landsat scientists measuring seasonal adjustments of rainfall. The occupation is of satellite towns, the "population surges, terracing/the hills. . ./filling swamps reclaiming land"(11). Humanity is caught in its own degeneration.

Analogous to the pilot, the poet has a bird's eye view of the poem. Yet, there is the danger, that he "objectifies," to the point where even "the crested grebe/moves out of range"(16). Far from familiarising the reader, the pastoral subject is found to be even more remote and inaccessible:

Edmund Burke
as if to focus on an errant
partner's features without
their knowing will reveal
a truth suspected or desired,
the ***I is an other***
the ***I is*** another
I am enlarging in the self
of reflexivity, threatening
self-preservation
sublimely(13)

Here, the "I" is constantly under stress, as it will be for the rest of the volume.

Subjectivity, then, is constructed through its relation to place. Rod Giblett argues that just as we are unable to represent "place" except by metaphors, so too are we unable to represent human states or abstractions except by metaphors of places or sites(8). In "Bluff Knoll Sublimity," Kinsella interrogates the limits of pathetic fallacy through repeating Shelley's poetic trip: "[O]n seeing Mont Blanc—THE POEM—

/and not Mont Blanc–THE MOUNTAIN–/the surrounding plains/ with their finely etched topography/can be brought into focus"(18). Yet, it becomes apparent that place is necessarily a *lived* site and can only be known temporally, moment by moment. In this respect, it is understood as social space. Dedicated to Tracy, "It's the who you've left behind/ that becomes the concern." Like pastoral, separation and loss of the other inform the sublime. Following the Romantic exploration of the sublime through mountain landscape, he suggests that the verticality of distance is "less inclined/to impress itself as separation."

"Poems With~~out~~ Radnoti" further explores absence. The Derridean title and final line of the opening quote, "Half-lines were all that I wrote," reinforce an erasure at the level of the page. This epigraph comes from Radnóti's fifth eclogue, which is itself dedicated to Gyorgy Balint, one of Radnóti's closest friends, who went missing in 1943 and was presumed dead. Kinsella's series is also dedicated to persons currently missing in his life–Tracy and Juno [Gemes] back in Australia. Divided into six sections, the first section is set in Cambridge. The assertion, "I'm here & comfortable, here by choice, happy with what I'm not" is at once, undercut by the "darkness behind the veneer," of nightmares and "weathered emptiness"(48). This also echoes Radnóti's "Dreamscape:"

> And now the dreamy landscape leaps away
> swimming on monstrous wings over the further air,
> and the terrified bird drifts in the cloudy sky
> driven by this nightmare (*Foamy* 103).

These nightmares may form the "Intrusions" in the title of the second section, although Kinsella's attention is drawn to home, such that "the old world pylons/are silhouettes of their newer selves" The "sculptured gardens" of Cambridge and of European pastoral fade in his mind against the stronger and more open Australian memory of birds following boats back to jetties(49). In the third section, images of the city compete against the "wild place's tenure & tenancy"(50). The European landscape can only be understood through the images of art and "the superlatives of a recorded history." In contrast, there are "snap decisions" "beneath the great and warmish Southern skies"(50). There is also a persistence, the will of wildlife to grow back after bushfires being matched by his wife's letters still reaching him amongst the "coldest stones" of Cambridge (recalling the ancient prisons of his earlier poems). The "rapacious bird" is revealed to be homesickness and despair, as Kinsella desires to "be lost now in this antipodean space"(51).

Continuing on this intimate note, the fourth section contains an extended quote from Radnóti's "Love Poem."

> When Radnoti wrote: "It's Fall.
> They're beating hazel nuts down
>
> in the stalls/the stillness seeps from the walls./
> The dreamy pigeon perched by your neck, let it fly' (52).

Similarly separated from homeland and wife, the "rapacious bird" is for Radnóti, a "dreamy pigeon." Silence is translated into a meditative stillness. Kinsella argues that Radnóti is bonded to "the flux of notion," able to hear such sighs and endure:

> "What did you Radnoti know about the tides?. . .
> Did pre-war fields of yellowing grain
> lean towards the years of famine & depravity,
>
> hunger like a mullet stranded in primal mangroves
> on these occupied & fatal shores"
>
> Australia as a site of exile and dark deeds
>
> Sontag's democratizing of beauty
> foams like witness to your "And that's
>
> how you'll end too," the white-
> wash of freedom thrilling
>
> like a mix of mud and blood,
> the white flesh of oysters
>
> drying coldly just below
> the hesitant waterline(54).

The white bodies of the oysters are "laid bare" on racks from the river, "like the eviscerated/anatomies of more intricate creatures"(54) Around the same time as *The Radnoti Poems*, Kinsella would write an essay on Gemes' documentary photography of the New South Wales' Hawkesbury River which would eventually preface her collaboration with Robert Adamson, *The Language of Oysters*. However, his description also finds a strong visual equivalent in Radnóti's last-known poem, written about the death of his comrade, the violinist Mikos Lorsi:

I fell beside him and his corpse turned over,
tight already as a snapping string.
Shot in the neck. "And that's how you'll end too,"
I whispered to myself: "lie still; no moving.
Now patience flowers in death." Then I could hear
"Der sprint noch auf," above, and very near.
Blood mixed with mud was drying on my ear(*Foamy* 118).

As if confirming premonition, the poem belongs to a brief series, "Razglednicas," which were later found on Radnóti's body, soaked with fluid from the corpse as well as mud. "Razglednica" is Serbian for "picture postcard" an ironic reminder of how Renaissance pastoral was thought to exhibit the ideal or holiday relationship of Nature to Art. Kinsella's last poem is "Radnoti Quarantine: Razglednicas." It recounts Radnóti's final days as he imagines "their last hesitant movements, their forced march"(55). He questions the use of the pastoral and the sublime:

Those mountains bringing God no closer—elements
of the sublime drowned in their own words, that you might
have said look now to the journey of the tiny
shepherdress as she moves with the ripples of cloud
over the small lake's surface, but send no postcards. . .(55)

Kinsella is the receiver of Radnóti's postcards, in an age where consciousness is dulled through being "filled with readings of war." Our understanding of Radnóti's brutal death (shot once through the nape) is contextualised against the "footage from Vietnam/where the officer shoots the VC in Saigon/straight through the head." As a child, Kinsella read Purnell's *History of the Second World War*, looking up at his own landscape and the "heron splendidly awkward in its roosting/ tree, hunched and primal over the dark swamp water"(55). The only way in which he can now approach such events is through comparison, through trying to find his own "flux of notion." The swamp of his rural Australian homeland recalls the mud of the European lake near where Radnóti died—both become shifting landscapes. Kinsella is therefore able to finish his volume with an image of hope and caution:

poets aren't silent now, but the guns are behind
newspaper print, lurking in layer on layer
of tv and computer monitor screens, deaf
to their own presence like flocks of terrible birds

smothering the persistent voice of the heron
as it rises again and again, long after (55-56).

Succeeding over nightmare, the figure of Radnóti is ultimately given flight by Kinsella. While *The Radnoti Poems* constantly warns of the ill effects in superimposing European tradition over other landscapes, Kinsella himself cannot free his own poetics from such influence. Rather, his pastoral vision must remain hybrid, a continual negotiation of the two. In this respect, it follows the poetry of a fellow Western Australian, Randolph Stow, who combined European aesthetic, modern innovation, and Australian experience to develop an alternative pastoral. Yet, for Kinsella, there is a further challenge—of reading cultural memory in light of the present, and attempting to find connections between his physically distant "homeland" and more immediate subject locations.

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—ANN VICKERY

dear Ccc&cie,

Re: The psychogeography known as RADDLE MOON

> [a] book, even a fragmentary one, has a centre which attracts it. This centre is not fixed but is displaced by the pressure of the book and circumstances of its composition. Yet it is also a fixed centre which, if it is genuine, displaces itself, while remaining the same and becoming always more central, more hidden, more uncertain and more imperious. He who writes the book writes it out of desire for this centre and out of ignorance.
>
> —Blanchot

> It has long been said that the desert is monotheistic. Is it illogical or devoid of interest to observe that the district in Paris between Place de la Contrescarpe and Rue de l'Arbal conduces rather to atheism, to oblivion and to the disorientation of habitual reflexes? [. . .] Psychogeography could set for itself the study of the precise laws and specific effects of the geographical environment, consciously organized or not, on the emotions and behaviour of individuals.
>
> —Debord, *Les Lèvres Nues* 6, 1955

Out of desire for this "hidden," "displaced" and "imperious" centre, and out of ignorance of that centre, *Raddle moon* has, I think, become a kind of psychogeography—which rightly resists description but which nonetheless brings towards it the work which belongs to it. A haunted, porous "no-place," implicated but motile, built of little but the trace of the work that's appeared there—agglomerative, bulgy, made and unmade—what I've called a "utopia of shoddy upkeep," despairing of time, money and energy.

If *Raddle moon* is that psychogeography made of the trace of writers and artists across it and by the temporary local coherences they've made, it is this space that attracts its future work. And by future work, I don't just mean work that's out there and might think *Raddle moon* an appropriate venue. I mean work that hasn't been written yet. And of course I[1] think a lot about women's work here. Like any editor, I know how difficult it still is to bring out women's work and haven't forgotten witnessing what courage the very existence of a periodical like Kathleen Fraser's *HOW(ever)*—or later, Jessica Grim and Melanie

Neilson's *Big Allis*—could give and how courage became new thought and new work. Proust said don't be afraid to go too far because that's where the real work is. If I'm going to be utopian (if for no other reason than because, as Erin so succinctly puts it, How else?), I'm going to say that that's the psychogeography I aspire to: the place where writers, especially women, feel they can go "too far."

Tish—a great Canadian example of much of this in my own backyard—was distant in time, gender and (so I then thought) poetics. So I didn't get to see "it" happen close up until around 1989, when *Barscheit* (Christine Stewart, Catriona Strang, Lisa Robertson, eds.) occurred. Its very ephemerality (printed on hijacked equipment and "borrowed" paper, disseminated for free, and quickly), the sense of its constant immanence—there was no publishing schedule, so at any moment there could be a *Barscheit*—and its guerrilla-style protest against the silencing of unfashionable poetry/poetics (an unspoken editorial policy being to print works which would be rejected at another magazine—in the same way *Tish* saw itself publishing what *Prism* couldn't accept) made a literal space, an opening; found and amplified what Norma calls a "conversation" and got it within earshot of others.

So: that's a use. While we were figuring this out, of course, everything changed. Cyberspace makes a small-circulation, booklike magazine look a very strange way of finding like minds, and giving a particular conversation public space and certainly a labour-intensive way of making a relational context for varied works of writing and image. (I look at Laura's glorious online *non*^{2} and regret the sad weight of the physical world!) Can our bulky "real world" ephemerals, temporary as weather, any longer justify being printed in sweat, trees and wheelbarrowloads of cash?

Dear Chas.,

Re: l'archivisme, or "the circumstance of its composition"

You kindly as ever get in the way of my cramped impulse to throw the past out. ("When I see the word 'positioning,' I vomit") So, how to speak this history? In many ways, it now seems to me the record of an exploration of the use of public space. Therefore the record of my/our gradually shifting understandings of that space. Like a city of invisible but potent—or nicely temporary, but potent—architecture.

Born—in our minds—out of sheer desire to make "something where there was nothing," as Melissa says, in a fairly primitive, if urgent, sense,

Raddle moon—then *The raddle moon: an international review*—happened to come to be as a celebration of the tenth anniversary of the University of Victoria's Writing department. . . . Truth is, the magazine answered a particular moment of available resources—departmental money, a personal computer, my background in publishing—friendship (most importantly with Kathryn MacLeod, with whom I edited the first four issues); and an energetic sense of "leaving home" aesthetically (predictably, our relationship with the university lasted only one issue).

Behind that energy was the compulsion Kathryn and I felt to force open a window under threat of suffocation in the stale party atmosphere of the Canadian Content drive which only a decade earlier had come as a genuinely liberating force. As our manifesto in the third issue put it: "Perhaps because we come from an island ourselves and recognize the symptoms, we begin to see Canada as a tiny isolate land. And feel, nationally, 'bushed'. We notice that our drawers are stuffed with airmail stationery." We were at the end of those glory days of the '60s and '70s when the small press publishers in Canada—Talonbooks, Anansi, Coach House, et al.—had birthed and unearthed a new national literature and urged us all in large-character posters to READ CANADIAN. (For those of us then still in highschool—to chart the *absolute* history of *Raddle moon*, but also of the country—it had meant that by 1969, our young English teacher knew it was important to read Phyllis Webb's recent *Naked Poems* to her class of fifteen-year-olds. . . . Here, suddenly, out of the grey—3:30 pm, Wednesday, in the bleak cold "New Wing"—were these deft, ironic packets speaking self- conscious intelligence, opened to paradox, the political, the sexual and language itself. Here, suddenly, was this woman, this Canadian, thinking as we'd never known anyone to think, and some of us never recovered. Webb made poets wherever her work went in those days.)

But CanLit turned out to be a small literature, no matter how famously it was boiling up all around. Young writers we knew tended to read nothing but the same few Canadians—if they read at all (that Salinger "purity" model). Of course there was a lot else going on in Canada we didn't know about and might not have recognized if we had. Of course, of course. But the ocean's quite a moat, you know. So, restlessness, curiosity and comradeship morphed *From An Island* (which *The raddle moon* officially replaced) into a kind of "to-an-island"—an import rather than an export model—with editors in places as far off-centre as possible—north of 60 (the promised multi-layered Inuit sound poetry turned out to be impossible to translate, and sacred), Haifa, Florence, Africa, Japan. . . . And the name to name this: "red ochre moon," "earth as moon made of (red) earth"—in fact, three words we liked the sound of.

Dear Myung,[3]

Re: whatever publication

I've been reading your conversation with Yedda Morrison in ***Tripwire,*** hearing you saying things like, "For me, where I can say ***politicize*** I have to say the word ***generosity***. Implicit in being political is trying to restore the human face." And my attention's caught by your mention of the problem of "unrecognizability."

I've been thinking about "use" and "sufficiency" (re: ***Raddle moon***, re: whatever publication; re: public spaces) and about evolution's both adaptive and unforeseen solutions to unworkable situations and how these are different from the revolutionary (revolving) solutions proposed by certain aesthetics and how much attention I've given those, thinking there was no other way. And thinking these things, I stumbled—thanks to Sharla Sava—on Filliou's sweet formula

! > ?

"surprise is greater than questioning" and posted it on the wall here in 72-point type because it made me just plain happy. And curious. I puzzle, laughing, "how to obey?" this cheerful directive, this good-sounding and suggestive statement. And see perhaps I'd "meant" it as the nifty condensary of your neighbouring (and here I can say maybe *anti-* utopian) "generosity as method" and Laura's "In this vested, gendered, entirely fraught medium, the real question is what is being celebrated."[4]

I might have claimed your "unrecognizability" was the poetic we went in search of writ large across syntax, form, even content, trying to "be unfamiliar with what we [were] doing." But what you're talking about is somehow the opposite. Not the welcome pleasure of defamiliarization but the thing so unfamiliar we have no way of seeing it. (Say We is walking to a party without a gift and suddenly realizes that the street is full of gifts. We's still We. And the "gift" We picks up is dependent on it. And this is ground we've been over before. . . .)

Could thinking "surprise is greater than questioning" address this extreme-seeming and implicating difficulty (without an undermining engagement with oppositional structures—say, in a way parallel to "tactics" such as the enactment of self/work "as if"—***however*** one could conceive that "as if," without the slightest permission—or the vigorous reclaiming of pleasure, ditto)? It reminds me of that glorious scientific theory of late that it is species' desires, not their environments' dictates, that catalyze evolutionary adjustments—leaving us only impa-

tience to deal with! Given which, can sheer welcome make visible something unforeseen? (And is the genuinely public space inherently "generous" in this manner?)

No answers; but I do want to acknowledge Roy Miki's work "for" unrecognizability in Canada in *West Coast Line* and to point to *Chain*'s systemic refusal of certain forms of editorial choice and their investigation of somewhat parallel writing strategies—collaborations, programmatic writing. If there is ". . . thinking as space surrounds a building" (Jerry Estrin) can we say, "editing as [thinking as] space surrounds buildings"? It's certainly something to do with space.

Notes

1. As *Raddle moon* has had a number of co-editors and assistant and contributing editors through the years, I've used "I" and "we" fairly loosely throughout this piece. Past co-editors are Kathryn MacLeod, Catriona Strang, Lisa Robertson; past associate editors are Steven Forth and Vivian Marple; present contributing editors are Norma Cole, Erin Mouré, Nicole Brossard and Lisa Robertson. The magazine's existence, shape and *mentalité* owe a lot to them.
2. Laura Moriarty, ed. *non* http://socrates.berkeley.edu/~moriarty/
3. I want to be clear that this letter is addressed to Myung Mi Kim as a device only: we've never had any direct correspondence on this subject.
4. Laura Moriarty, in the "Women/Writing/Theory" colloquium, *Raddle moon* 11

—SUSAN CLARK

Primitive Grammars

The opening paragraphs of journalist Don Gillmor's account of a 1995 murder committed by two Jamaican-born cousins who had grown up in Toronto, Canada, contained a number of excerpts from police statements and courtroom testimony. Gillmor writes, "[The accused] Kinkead's language was exclusively a street vernacular. . .'Home boy had his shit out, he was all fucked up, know what I mean.' The statements were aural collages held together by primitive grammar and unlikely nouns." In court, however, his language altered: "Kinkead told the court that after the murder he had wandered in 'soliloquy.' He was 'ambivalent' about his earlier crimes; he had 'prevaricated' in other statements. He took on the language of his surroundings. Occasionally his retooled vocabulary went astray. A clue was dismissed as a 'lugubrious aberration.'" [1]

For Gillmor, Kinkead is a latter-day Caliban. In his attempts to define Kinkead's language as the language of a mad man, Gillmor ends up criminalizing an entire community. While Kinkead's behavior exhibits all the attributes of a psychopath, his language does not. Kinkead's language represents the use of performativity, non-English syntax, neologisms and vernacular lexicons, and code- or register-switching that is typical of black Canadians, especially those of Caribbean descent. Similar to the language use of other populations in the African diaspora, many black Canadians shift between the languages of the Caribbean and "standard" English according to context. Among younger black Canadians the vernaculars of African Americans are added to the mix.

Dub poetry has been crucial to the development of Canadian literature. Although dub poetry first came to prominence in the early 1980s in England and Jamaica through the work of Linton Kwesi Johnson and Oku Onoru respectively, its roots go much further back. It is a politically-charged oral poetry that draws on the dialect poems of Jamaican folklorist and anthropologist Louise Bennett, the "rapping" of Jamaican DJs over instrumental versions of reggae songs, the language of rastafarianism, and Bajan poet Kamau Brathwaite's notion of "nation language" which, in the midst of the movement towards Caribbean decolonization, asserted the primacy of regional culture and experience as poetic form and content.

While dub, for the most part, eluded the United States, in Canada, and especially amongst the large population of West Indian immigrants in Toronto, it had a tremendous influence. In the mid-1980s, dub poets such as Clifton Joseph (*Oral/Trans/Missions*), Lillian Allen (*Revolutionary Tea Party*), and ahdri zhina mandiela (*dark diaspora. . . in dub*) brought dub's political and aesthetic questions to Canada. Importantly, the dub poets recognized the problem of access that black writers have had to the institutions of Canadian literature. They challenged the staid, text-obsessed Canadian League of Poets for membership. And although they are all published writers, they saw the limited ability the written word had in reaching a black audience that rarely reads literary journals. Their venues were live performances, college radio programs and independently produced cassettes and CDs. This underground literary economy in some cases actually sells more units than the books of "mainstream" Canadian poets.

The dub poets and their progeny remain the step-children of the CanLit establishment. Their decision not to use the literary journals is as much one of strategy as it is the product of editorial policies that privilege certain genres over others. It is a sign of the gap between these communities that the recent work by contemporary dub poets,

rappers, and other "spoken word" artists rarely make it into anthologies and journals and rarely receive the critical attention that self-consciously "literary" genres get. Thus recent CD releases such as Michael St. George's *Root 2 Fruit*, Black Katt's *answer the call. . .*, or Motion's *Use What You Got* remain almost unknown to a larger public. And the poets included on Anthony Bansfield (Nth Digri) compilation *Word Life: Tales of the Underground Griot* don't make appearances in George Elliot Clarke's anthology *Eyeing the North Star: Directions in African-Canadian Literature* or the Caribbean Canadian issue of the Toronto-based literary journal *Descant*.

The work produced by younger poets in the 1990s occasionally has less of an explicit debt to the Caribbean. While the influence of dub and reggae, as well as of dancehall's elaborate, insiderist configurations of patois, can still be heard, often this more recent poetry is indistinguishable in form and content from that of their African American peers. This writing draws on constructions of a black nationalist subject found in the poets of the Black Artist Movement, Negritude, or nation-conscious rap artists, and uses idealized notions of blackness and Africa, and conservative tropes of nationhood grounded in a heterosexist and masculinist rhetoric of family, roots, and economic empowerment. There is, though, a place for feminist critique, sometimes radical, sometimes limited to a plea for the reformation of male/female relationships in the black community. Often the writing is therapeutic, using the pop spiritualism of Ayanla Vanzant, Maya Angelou, or the popular books of days for inspirational critiques of sexual abuse, incest, and racism. They aren't the themes of the professional, academically-validated poet, but they reflect the concerns and modes of thought of its primary audience: a black community.

At its worst, this writing simply reflects the problems, desires, and aspirations of a segment of Canada's black population, at its best it questions and critiques its norms and practices. Yet either way, it disrupts the misguided representations and debased narratives of black people (such as Gillmor's) that make up the everyday discourse of race in Canada, and through its refashioning of language and genre the canon of Canadian literature.

Notes

1. Don Gillmor, "Killing Cousins," *Toronto Life*, September 1998, p. 140

—PETER HUDSON

Compared to the United States, Canada's literary mainstream is relatively small and remains confined to the country's two or three major cities. To speak of a central Canadian tradition or canon seems somewhat presumptuous given the country's young age. Still, it is customary among Canada's few established authors to criticize most radical or avant-garde approaches to writing as being too American, as if novelty or experimentation has little value north of the 49th. Hence, Jeff Derksen, a founding member of the Kootenay School of Writing, in conversation with the American poet, Ron Silliman, evokes a common Canadian censure when he links the Kootenay School of Writing's marginal status within his own country's literary tradition at least partially to its American affiliations. Having strong cultural connections with the behemoth to the south, Derksen hints, can damage one's credibility in the eyes of established Canadian writers and networks. Uncomfortable with KSW's experimental approach to poetry, other more mainstream Canadian writers, he notes, have been quick to denounce the school's activities as a sort of "branch plant" for American language writing—or in the words of Silliman, "a language poetry maquilladora."[1] Rather than confront directly some of the issues in language and poetics the school continues to raise through its programming and events, Derksen suggests, the most common rebuttal to KSW's own criticism of mainstream culture is simply to dismiss the school's national relevance as a literary movement. To consider KSW as basically an American institution, in other words, allows Canada's more conservative writers to repudiate the school's unique work in class, gender and race politics as extraneous to all Canadian contexts.

Yet, for many Canadian writers, especially those outside the traditional canon, the school's fifteen-year existence evokes a particularly vital role within national literary networks as a one of the most important centers in Canada for experimental work. Support for KSW was never more evident than in the spring of 1998 when writers across the country were called on to protest the City of Vancouver's decision to withdraw all civic funding of the school's reading series.

As an independent "writers-run" center, the Kootenay School of Writing is no stranger to financial crises, especially those originating in provincial or civic funding cuts. Its very inception in Vancouver derived from the province's financial shutdown of David Thomson University Centre (DTUC) in Nelson, BC in 1983. Teachers and students from DTUC attempted to re-establish an alternative post-secondary environment in which creative writing and cultural theory could be

studied independent of the conventional university classroom and for far less tuition fees. Since that time KSW has garnered national and international recognition as a site of diverse, innovative writing practices. The school's programming provides local, national and international exposure for Vancouver writing, while at the same time introducing the city to a variety of different writers from around the world. A typical season for KSW will feature ongoing reading series, artist talks, both provincial and national book launches and extended courses in creative writing, poetics and literary theory. Last year we hosted over 70 writers and artists including Dionne Brand (winner of 1997 Governor-General's Award for Poetry), Robin Blaser and Sharon Thesen, Michael Ondaatje, novelist, Robert Gluck and acclaimed British poets Tom Raworth and Drew Milne. In addition to these readings, KSW also held several intense workshops and lecture series by poets like Lisa Robertson, Lydia Kwa and lesbian activist and novelist, Karen X Tulchinsky. Many of the younger writers who have participated in these courses have gone on to give readings at KSW and to publish books of their own.

Recognizing KSW's unique function as an important port of entry for international literary figures, authors both in and outside Canada were quick to voice their support for the threatened center. Jean Day, a California poet and editor, noted her fascination with the "vitality and diversity of the very identifiably 'Vancouver' writing scene," describing the school as a "paramount venue for new writing in Canada."[2] Cydney Chadwick, another California writer and executive director of Syntax Projects for the Arts, echoes this sentiment: KSW, she writes, fosters cultural exchange, for it has shown Vancouver to be "a city that is hospitable to innovative writing and writers [and] a progressive and necessary place to visit." Above the 49th parallel: the Ottawa poet and teacher, Bob Hogg, also qualified the Kootenay School of Writing as important "cultural nexus" for innovative writing, adding that its sometimes small audiences do in no way reflect its literary value. He writes, "we are in a somewhat benighted time as far as poetry and its support go. This fact has been noted and lamented by poets and literary critics alike, but we should not make the mistake of assuming that it is because poetry has become irrelevant, or that it has ceased to speak to the people meaningfully."

This critical correlation of KSW's marginal identity as a cultural institute with the genre of poetry in general appears in many of the letters of support sent to the city at that time. Poetry, especially new work, cannot pretend to the audience sizes and spectacles associated with other popular forms of entertainment. In contrast to the more commercially developed industries of music and film, writing gener-

ally produces few globally recognized celebrities. Yet, as the Montreal poet, Erin Mouré (winner of the 1988 Governor General's Award for Poetry), points out, "places like the Kootenay School, where experimentation and innovation are key, produce works that have a much larger influence than mere numbers can convey." Indeed, Mouré notes, the actual measurement of a poetry's cultural resonance is always complicated, being often a matter of how deeply a work may penetrate a particular community, rather than a question of sheer readership size. Mouré classifies this type of influence as a "reverberatory effect," where writers stimulated by the KSW "environment" go on to invigorate others with their own innovations, who, in turn, communicate their ideas to still others, and on, ad infinitum. "This reverberatory effect," for Mouré, "is the lifeblood. . .of even mainstream art; without it. . .you end up with noisy trivia."

True to Mouré's description, KSW has rarely been noisy. And it is likely this more or less deliberate lack of fanfare that originally inspired the punitive cuts in funding from the city of Vancouver. Envisioning a more polished, elite celebration of famous writers, the city quite suddenly refused to acknowledge the extensive community already in place.

Moments of crisis, whether financially driven or otherwise, tend to inspire the drawing of boundaries. When a community or program of thought becomes questioned, lines of definition need to be established, often defensively, in response to what is perceived to be an external threat. In this capacity, these letters of support function ably. Challenged to show the community behind the text, KSW had no course of action but to reach for its diverse, yet formidable Rolodex. The city council demanded noise. Fortunately, the many contingent poetry scenes and networks still connected to the Kootenay School of Writing were happy to oblige.

Notes

1. Jeff Derksen and Ron Silliman, *Philly Talks* 6 (1 1 October, 1998): 14.
2. This and all further quotes in support of KSW are taken directly from the many letters of support sent to Vancouver City Council in spring 1998. The letters themselves remain on file at KSW headquarters in Vancouver, BC, Canada.

—ANDREW KLOBUCAR

"[Y]our hands have unsettled/ the way we hear ourselves," writes Harold Paddock in his elegy for Noel Dinn, a pivotal figure in the Newfoundland cultural renaissance of the mid-1970's. A drummer and a pianist, Dinn and his hands *did* unsettle, helped re-invent, the island's traditional music, that remarkable blend of Irish, English, French, Scottish and local Newfoundland song, in his internationally-acclaimed band "Figgy Duff" (named for a boiled pudding made of raisins and molasses, common fare in Newfoundland). The intimate fusion of ancient and contemporary, traditional and progressive in the sound of "Figgy Duff" both reclaimed and recontextualized Newfoundland music; it gave lyrical articulation to the paradoxes of a society in transition.

Almost any Saturday evening in St. John's, the province's capital, you can walk downtown to a pub for "The Session"—an informal gathering of musicians. Fiddles, bodhrans, bouzoukis, guitars, whistles, concertinas, and songs so deeply rooted in place they are the landscape of the island as much as bog and barren, harbour and cove. And every second summer St. John's hosts the International Sound Symposium—a nine-day exploration of sound and its relationship to various art forms, which is billed as "one of the most innovative events and the most interesting sound environments in the world." Symphony for ship's horn, music by Meccano set. African drumming, sound installations. The shriek of gulls.

In Britain's oldest colony and Canada's youngest province, old and new flourish together next to the always-inconstant North Atlantic. Newfoundland has a culture as strong in story as in song. There, language is the repository of memory, a form of entertainment and a force of identity as much as a means of communication. Oral tradition is resident not residual. For more than twenty years, the editors of *TickleAce* have been gathering the complex vibrancy of this culture in a journal of literary and visual arts. The journal derives its name from "tickle-ace" or "tickle-ass" or "tickle-lace," names for the kittiwake, a gull common in Newfoundland. The choice expresses commitment to the linguistic distinctiveness of Newfoundland and Labrador. *TickleAce* first appeared in 1977, twenty years after one of Newfoundland's pre-eminent scholars George Story wrote "Dialect and Standard Language," his landmark essay on the need to study rather than suppress (as inferior) Newfoundland English. But this was still five years before the 1982 appearance of *The Dictionary of Newfoundland English*, the fascinating volume Story spent years editing with his colleagues,

Kirwin and Widdowson. The word "tickle-ace" links the journal, whose central purpose is the fostering of the province's literary and artistic community, with a cultural and intellectual movement to give legitimacy to the beauty and dignity of a people's expression.

I asked Mary Dalton, an early editor of *TickleAce*, whether the journal's cultural mandate was regional or nationalist. National in a Newfoundland, not a Canadian context, for Newfoundland was a country after it was a colony and before it became a province. The barest majority voted for Confederation with Canada in a 1948 referendum that split families and broke hearts. There remains in the province, at least among many intellectuals and artists, and in part because of the Canadian Government's disastrous fisheries management, a misgiving, a sense that Newfoundland might better have maintained its independence, despite Confederation's proffered affluence. Dalton replied that rather than being regional or nationalist, the journal was "solipsistic, in a good way." The focus was Newfoundland, its writing, language, and art; the editors were, she suggested, just interested in themselves as Newfoundlanders.

When it began, *TickleAce* was the only literary journal in Newfoundland and Labrador, and so it remains. There are other journals with a focus on Newfoundland life and studies, and other literary journals (such as *Protocol*, *Scruncheons*, and *Squonk*), but none lasted more than a couple of issues. The assertion that early editors were interested in themselves as Newfoundlanders is, then, neither chauvinistic nor limited; rather, it indicates a recognition of need: no other journal gave Newfoundland artists and writers a forum for cultural exploration.

This cultural exploration takes many forms. No one literary genre is preferred in *TickleAce* although the inclination of the journal has generally been toward poetry and visual art, more recently introducing fiction, reviews and interviews with established writers like Wayne Johnston and Bernice Morgan. Neither has one style of writing been preferred, despite Harold Horwood's recent complaint in *Books in Canada*, which suggests the magazine indulges often and laxly in "deconstruction" and free verse; "bits and pieces of English major stuff and creative writing seminars tend to fly off in all directions at once," he writes in a cranky review of the journal (Sept. 1997, p 3). But it looks to me that, while the magazine entertains a wide array of techniques and considerable stretch, there is more "traditional" work in *TickleAce* than in most of the other little magazines in Canada—more rhymed and formal verse, a more pervasive sense of story. Porter, the longest standing member of the magazine's editorial collective, acknowledges that there might well be a stronger narrative impulse in the work

published in *TickleAce*, even in its lyric verse, than there is elsewhere. I would attribute this not so much to lack of linguistic risk or generic experiment, as to the subtly-storied orientation to language I encountered everywhere in Newfoundland during my stay there. I have never met so many people who spoke in anecdote, or who recognized their language as a tale in itself.

Rightly or wrongly, I attribute this attitude towards language to grounding in a still-pervasive, still-vital oral culture. In many respects, Newfoundlanders are proudly, fiercely oral. No surprise, then, to find that part of *TickleAce*'s original mandate was to make space for traditional forms, or that the Spring/Summer 1997 "Fish & Brewis" issue (named for another of Newfoundland's national dishes) included the winners of a ballad-writing contest. At first glance, such poems might seem variations on hackneyed forms. But to dismiss them so easily is to ignore the immense linguistic drama occurring at the juncture between oral and written cultures, to overlook the continual soundings of the oral within written language. In the best traditional Newfoundland ballads, whether hundreds of years or weeks old, whether they bemoan the lack of tobacco during a long winter freeze, lament the loss of a ship and crew, or eulogize a way of life destroyed by the cod moratorium, language is much more than commodity; it is the texture, the articulation, the enactment of community. Words are salted through with history, materiality. Each singer, performer, writer, or reader who approaches (whether to preserve or adapt) these forms must burrow into them, open out their language, open up *to* language. The old forms may be true harbingers of moment and movement.

TickleAce is doing what it set out to do. The fourth issue began with the boast that during its first year of existence, the magazine had presented the work of more than twenty-five previously unpublished writers, as well that of more established authors. Over the years, many of Newfoundland's best young writers were first published in its pages: Michael Crummey, Ken Harvey, Lisa Moore, Carmelita McGrath and Michael Winter, to name just a few. If the focus of *TickleAce* has been to promote Newfoundland writing, it welcomes mainland writers. Despite the fact that the population of the entire province is less than that of some major Canadian cities, there has been no shortage of good Newfoundland writers to publish, so the editors have rarely felt the need to solicit work from "away," but neither have they turned back good work simply because it was submitted from elsewhere. Next to Percy Janes, Tom Dawe, John Steffler, and Paul Bowdring, then, you find Don McKay or damian lopes, Barb Schott or Ven Begamudré. Newfoundland has such a strong artistic heritage, it's no surprise that the visual art in the magazine is almost exclusively by artists living in or

from Newfoundland. Along with that of the native-born artists David Blackwood, Christopher Pratt, Ned Pratt and Gerald Squires is the work of such immigrants to the island as Anne Meredith Barry, Luben Boykov, Christine Koch, Mary Pratt and Don Wright.

Design, layout, paper weight, type, reproductions of visual art, cover art—all these have been steadily refined, especially under the careful eye of Bruce Porter, who, along with Dalton, Paul Bowdring and Art Wildish, revived the briefly-moribund journal in 1980 with a new, more polished-looking *TickleAce* 5. Production is rooted in home, part of a conscious effort to ensure that the journal contributes not only to the cultural community of Newfoundland, but also to its economy.

Inside the front cover of every issue of *TickleAce* is printed a quotation from *Birds of Newfoundland* that describes the call and the habits of the kittiwake. The excerpt has transformed to motif; several of the statements introducing individual issues—perhaps with more frequency than is, strictly speaking, necessary—play over details of the bird drinking salt water, sleeping on the open ocean, perching on ice bergs, travelling great distances from Old World to New. Yet, the best line in the passage, has so far been left to lie.

"Unlike most other gulls they are not given to scavenging": Now *there's* a motto for a little magazine, especially one from Newfoundland which has a history based, in part, upon that very thing. Newfoundlanders have long been scavengers, and necessarily so. There are stories from the 19th and early 20th century of people from coastal outports risking their lives to save the crews of wrecked ships, and then, as the crews watched, stripping everything of value off the ships before they were irretrievably lost. This was not larceny, although sometimes people were tried for such; it was self-preservation. The harshness of life perched on the edge of a rock in the midst of the North Atlantic required of Newfoundlanders an inventiveness, an ability and willingness to make do with whatever came to hand. Scavengers, then. But not like garbage-eating gulls. Scavengers who find in what others leave behind the very thing necessary for cultural survival; bricoleurs of wit and ingenuity, turning the old into the new.

—MARNIE PARSONS

"On the H Orizon: bpNichol after ten." A conference sponsored by *West Coast Line*. Vancouver, B.C.: September 25-26, 1998.

A conference entitled "On the H Orizon," organized by Roy Miki and Miriam Nichols for *West Coast Line* magazine in September 1998 invited contextual evaluations of Nichol's work on the tenth anniversary of his death. The strongest presentations expressed concern about the future disposition and readership of Nichol's work, and involved retrospective looks at the situation of Nichol's work in the canon.

Frank Davey's opening salvo was a challenge to the editors of Nichol's posthumous publications not to undercut his radicalism by presenting him as Saint bp, wholesome, amusing, and delightfully clever. Chief among sins in this regard, although I do not recall Davey referring to it directly, was the recent publication of a collection of Nichol's work called *An H in the Heart,* edited by George Bowering and Michael Ondaatje. This collection was referred to repeatedly in conference papers as an example of what is wrong, or going wrong, with Nichol studies: a hagiography of personality and emotion that undermines Nichol's difficulty, resistance, and aggression. The ensuing "trademark bp" is a distortion created by well-meaning editors who wish to disseminate Nichol's work to a popular, i.e, institutional readership (for Nichol's work will be popularized largely through posthumous publications being adopted as texts in poetry classes) with the result that his more difficult texts will be marginalized to the point of disappearance, or will remain unpublished. What is needed, Davey suggested, is for editors to rescue Nichol "from his own ambivalent humanism." To continue the uncritical acceptance that has largely characterized the response to his work since his death in 1988 would be, as Davey said, to "contaminate" the way Nichol will be read in the future.

Many of the panelists distinguished two streams of Nichol's work: the books of *The Martyrology,* Nichol's long poem; and the compositions related to his sound poetry work with The Four Horsemen, the drawings and cartoons, the concrete poetry, and the 'pataphysics projects. *The Martyrology* suffered most, several panelists concurring as to its failure to "shake off its own humanism" and attachment to "meaning, pathos, and courage." For example, *The Martyrology* and the lyric poetry were seen to fail to have "problematized whiteness": in Ashok Mathur's computerized intervention, the word "brown" bounced around the text of one of Nichol's more solemn lyrics—a ploy Nichol would have appreciated. Darren Wershler-Henry, Clint Burnham, and Peter Jaeger in their turn criticized the lack of real criticism of

Nichol's work, its mistaken place in the postmodernist canon, and the overvaluation of the radicalism of *The Martyrology*. Despite Roy Miki's and Jeff Derksen's protestations that Nichol's ouevre constitutes "a probable system" and "a democratic text," the tenor of the strongest panel presentations was that Nichol's work, especially if this work is understood to consist primarily of *The Martyrology* and the like, is in danger of being lost to sentimentality.

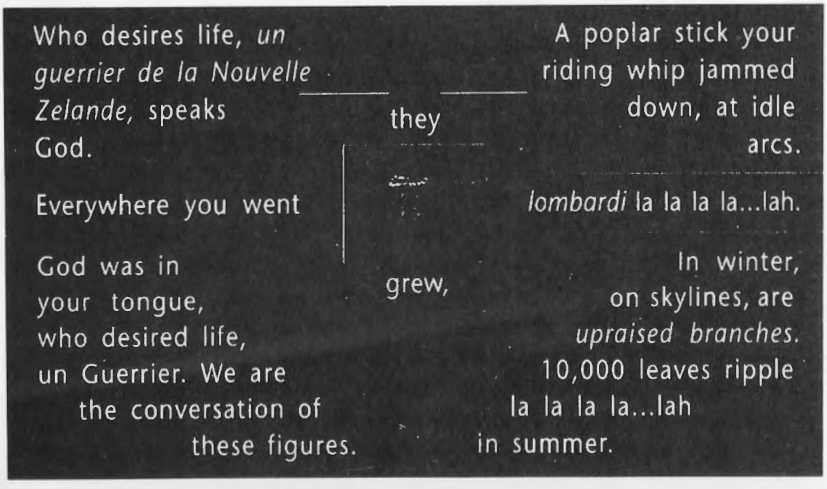
The major obsessions of *The Martyrology* and much of Nichol's lyric poetry are mortality, language (poetry), and time. Dead at age 46, Nichol was prescient about his own limited time on earth. In hindsight it seems churlish to attack a writer of Nichol's stance (a pointedly democratic one) and stature (however arguable in canonical terms) for his preoccupations. In his typically maverick style, Nichol wrote outside the English Department, and, with the exception of the above-mentioned posthumously edited selection *An H in the Heart,* deliberately published only with small, even obscure, presses, or was self-published. As a longtime member of the Coach House Press editorial board, he helped bring into print and make significant the work of poets such as Fred Wah, Daphne Marlatt, and Steve McCaffery, and the group of Toronto Jamaican-Canadian writers known as De Dub Poets. And his sound poetry performances with The Four Horsemen are still fresh, still brilliant and amazing on recordings and videotapes such as Ron Mann's "Poetry in Motion."

This is not to stay any criticism of Nichol with descriptions of what a great guy he was. As conference panelists frequently pointed out, that is a given. What concerns me today is the degree to which evaluation is conflated with categorization, and the degree to which categories multiply, with their attendant value judgements which come down, basically, to bad and good, and their counterparts modernist/postmodernist, humanist/anti-humanist, lyrical/radical, etc. etc. Although it was bracing and necessary to produce a frank appraisal of the contemporary disposition of Nichol's work, the conference also produced superficial judgements made on the basis of tell-tale poetic equivalents of hotel-and-lingerie receipts. In the meantime, everyone admits to ordering hundreds of copies of *An H in the Heart* for their classes—with probably much less reluctance than they might think they should feel.

—SHARON THESEN

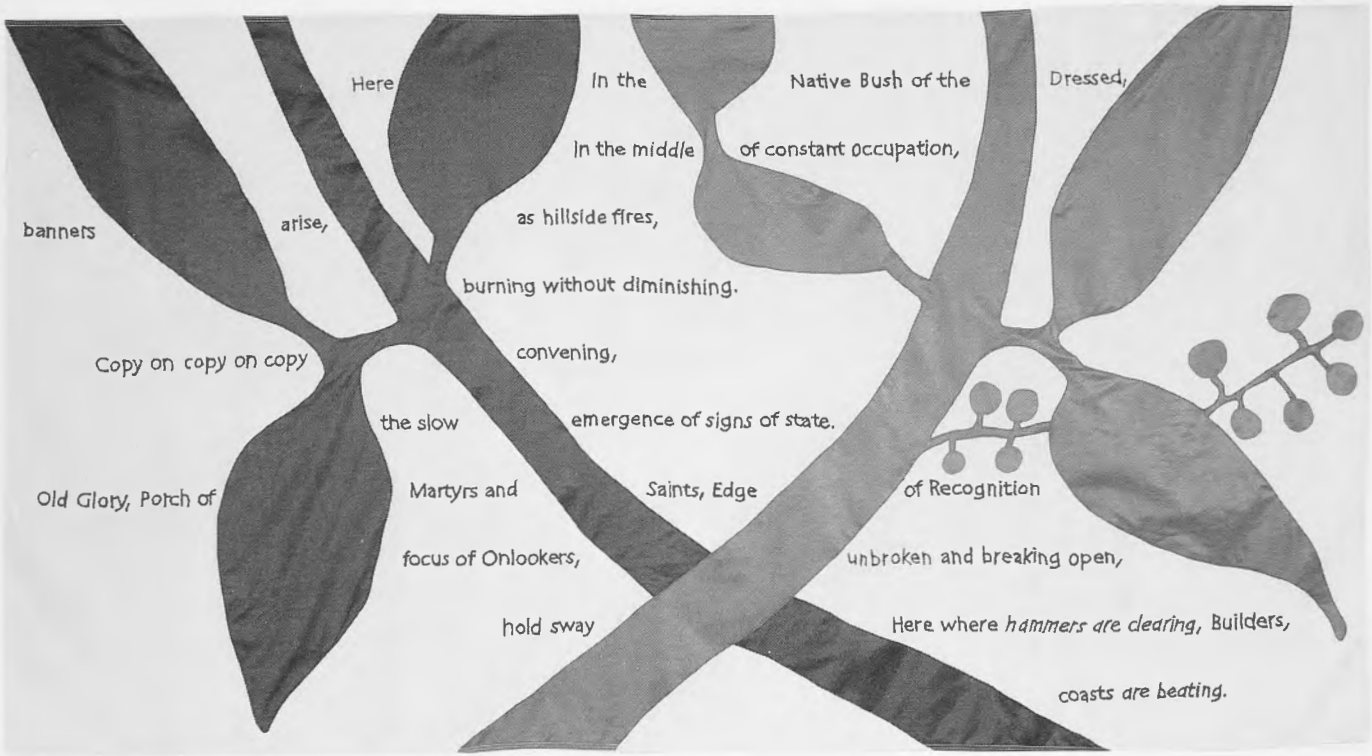
Just prior to the show's installation, Auckland's imposing Central Railway Station, cavernously empty, assumed an almost melancholy air: this site of a half-century of greetings and farewells, recently decommissioned and given up to neglect and immanent 'development', was about to receive, belatedly and fortuitously, a passing out parade. Despite its title though *Station of Earthbound Ghosts* was neither named nor produced for this or any other specific site. And yet any less culturally neutral a site would hardly have served so well. Leigh Davis's flags are not really at home in art galleries; unlike those of Jasper Johns or even Matt Mullican, they do not like a white wall. And lacking any natural indoor site their venue necessarily becomes a matter of negotiation. As it happened this installation effectively annexed and transformed the Station's capacious melancholy, linking it to ghosts, meeting grounds and journeys, information and systems of communication, way beyond what was once its compass.

All but one of the flags were manufactured by a local company, Blue Grass Flags; they measured 3.5 by 1.5 metres and their making involved dyeing, hand applique, and screen printing. Davis wrote the texts, but for the combination of image and text he sought the collaboration of two designers, Stephen Canning and Christine Hansen. Flown from their 'heads' in rows of three down the full length of the grand concourse of the Station, these flags were accompanied by plinths surmounted by small diagrams orienting them for normal reading.


Who desires life, *un guerrier de la Nouvelle Zelande,* speaks God.
they
A poplar stick your riding whip jammed down, at idle arcs.
Everywhere you went
lombardi la la la la...lah.
God was in your tongue, who desired life, un Guerrier. We are the conversation of these figures.
grew,
In winter, on skylines, are *upraised branches.* 10,000 leaves ripple la la la la...lah in summer.

Two flags, one red and one black, carry a single word: *hau*. Outside, from a flagpole in the Station grounds, an extra large red Hau flag flutters in the sea breeze. Another flag carries these lines:'In the copy of this meeting house,/its shaded porch, are angels breathing. / And where the wind blows there is *Hau*.' (*Consider Rosellas*'). *Hau* is Maori for *wind* , *air*, or *breath*; also for vital energy, the life force of a person or thing. As a verb it means to *strike*, or *hit* and was used as a battle cry. Taken together these two flags make up another word: *hauhau*. Last century, English settlers described members of the Pai marire religion as *hauhau* because of a chant of theirs which involved the unison sucking and expelling of breath. Founded by Te Ua Haumene, Pai marire was one of a number of Maori/Christian movements which sprung up in response to and in rebellion against European settlement. Many of these groups devised their own flags. *Hauhau* was soon used to demonise all forms of Maori insurgency. Issuing thus from the bleeding edge of New Zealand's bicultural past, Davis uses it to name the complex space of exaltation and terror that is the world of his earthbound ghosts. 'A theory of *hauhau* is the ground of the project.' he says.

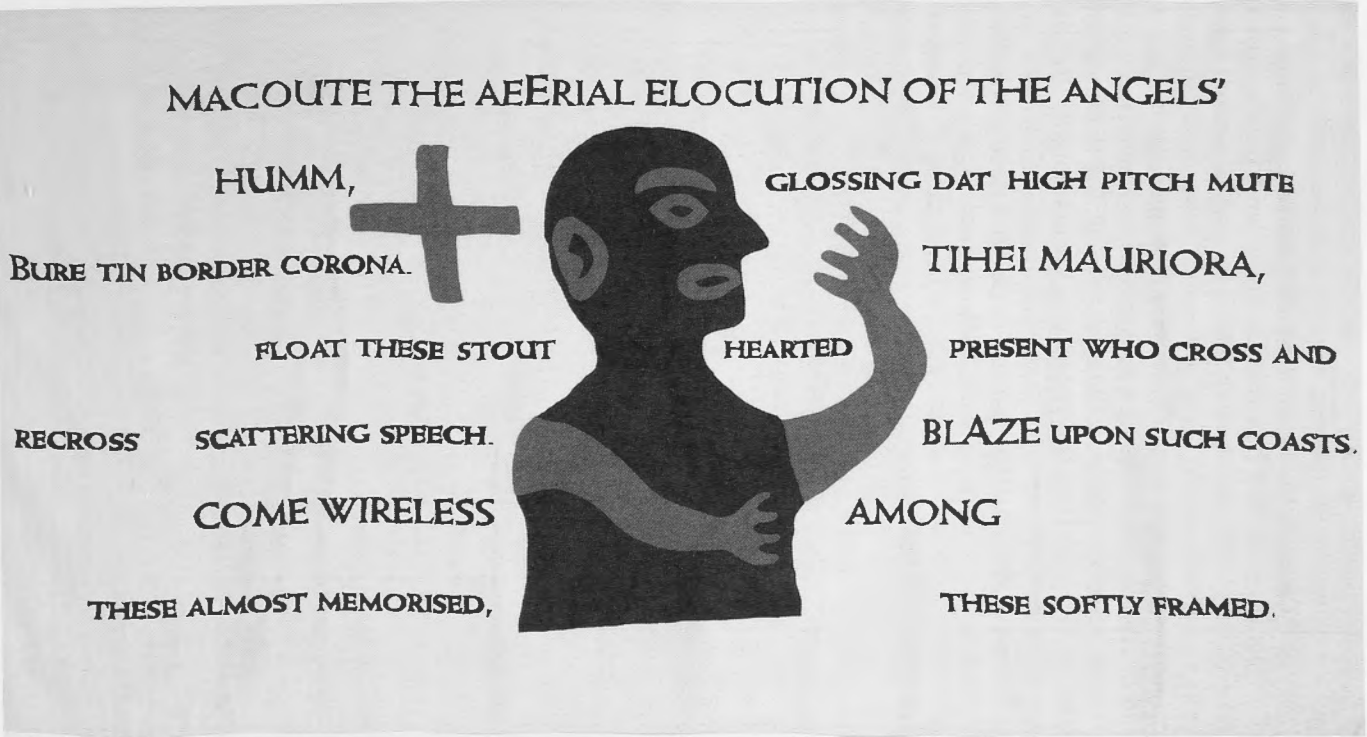
Leigh Davis is best known for *Willy's Gazette*, a book of poems published more than ten years ago, which earned him the reputation of the terrible child of 80s New Zealand poetry. His subsequent silence as a poet, which coincided with his successes in the business world, was a source of relief to some; it had less to do with a disenchantment with poetry as such than with its vehicles: especially the book,especially the slim effete tome, and the limited terms of its circulation here. Maybe the book was done for? Maybe it has been washed into some backwater by the fluid forces of the new electronic media? According to Regis Debray the computer's 'dematerialization releases thought from the weight of things, increases its mobility, multiplies its possibilities. From the bookish metaphor to the computational one, the passage is not only, indeed, from heavy to lightweight, rigid to soft, rough to smooth,. . .but from inert to the animate.' ("The Book as Symbolic Object") By this account the computer releases the *hau* of language. Despite the occasional appearance of the pixelated image, however, Davis's book of flags relies for its *hau* on the literal movements of the air which animate and broadcast its messages, and on the movements of readers threading their ways the length and breadth of the installation to enact the para-book circulation of meaning the poet is after. Far from modern, flags seem the obstinate vestige of an all but obsolete sign system, yet so unequivocally and literally do they continue to mark situations of ownership, loyalty, identity, power, rule, nationhood and so on, that their place in shaping the public domain seems assured. And



"Here in the Native Bush of the Dressed"
Leigh Davis. Photo courtesy of Patrick Reynolds.

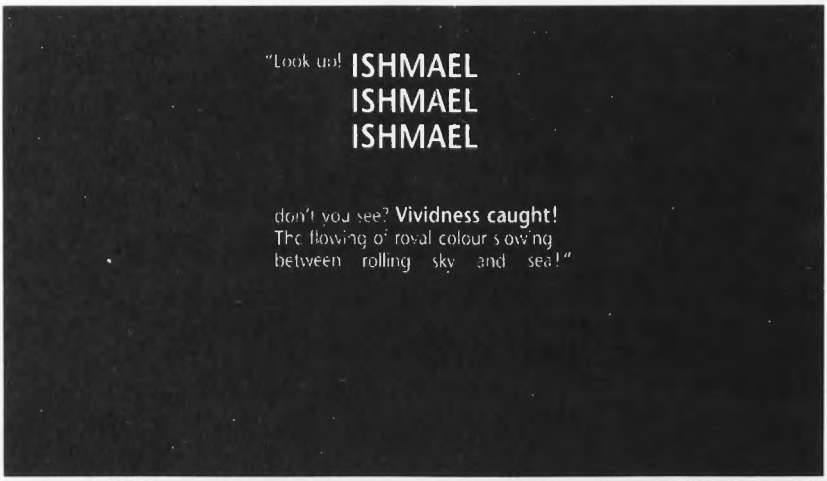
since those situations are at the heart of Davis's texts and images, the flag has, for the time at least served to allay his doubts.

Davis was drawn to the flag as much for its past as its present. The image on the flag *Macoute* at the centre of the first row of the installation derives from an historic flag colloquially referred to as the 'Te Kooti standard'. Te Kooti te Turuki Arikirangi is the chief ghost of Davis's show. A reading of Judith Binney's recent justly praised biography, *Redemption Songs* provided the starting point, and while only a minority of the flags make direct reference to him, Te Kooti's spirit informs them all. Few figures in New Zealand history have occupied such extreme poles as this 19th century Maori leader, those of terrorist, statesman and saint. He remains to this day an often bitterly controversial figure among both Maori and European. As I have suggested, for Davis, *hauhauism*, is a kind of avant-garde expression; it was settler fear of Maori cultural innovation that gave rise to the word. In his show, the great poetic power of Te Kooti's claims on Christian authority, are acknowledged (in the flag *Brown Te Kooti* 'Brown Te Kooti and Jesus in red serge stand high talking, of Urewera heaven and beach hell'.) His angelic elocution, the tumult of his grammar—I am paraphrasing Davis here—his glossolalia, '*lombardi* la la la la lah.'Also acknowledged is his responsiblity for one of the most significant innovations in 19th century Maori art, the painted meeting house. For the members of the Ringatu Church that he founded, the meeting house was, as it continues to be, their place of worship. The design of *Native Bush of the Dressed. . .*is derived from the best of these houses and Te Kooti's 'bride', Te Rongopai.



"Macoute"
Leigh Davis. Photo courtesy of Patrick Reynolds.

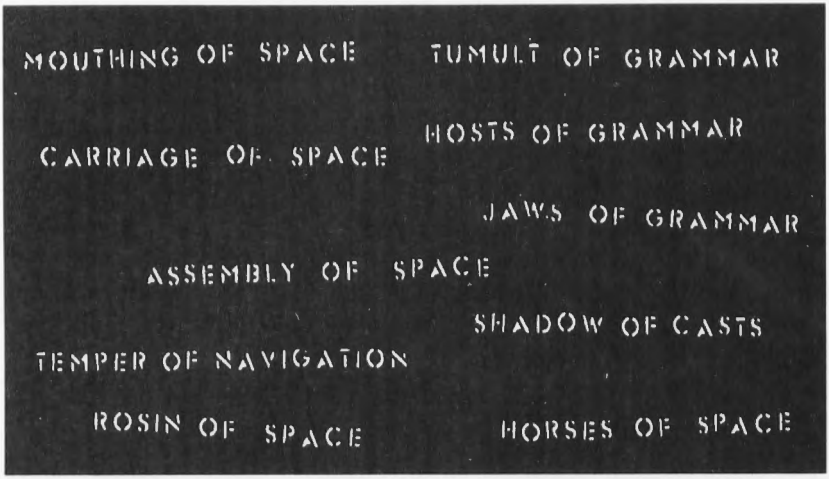
The Railway Station installation entertained the idea, through projecting its name on the ceiling, that its grand concourse was a meeting house, indeed Te Rongopai itself. This house and church was built for Te Kooti's promised return to his home land; but because of the traumatic and bloody events with which he was associated there, the dangers to himself and the local community from both European and Maori were such that he never did return, 'the marriage' was never consumated. The installation made a map of his situation laying it over the plan of the building by naming the entrance hall: Bay of Plenty—the place of Te Kooti's exile—and the corridor to the concourse: Waioeka Gorge, the most direct route to Te Rongopai, and the small East Coast city of Gisborne. In March 1999, *Station of Earth Bound Ghosts* is to be reinstalled in the Gisborne Army Hall—another far from neutral venue—and preceded by a service and korero (seminar) at Te Rongapai. For the Ringatu priests, the exhibition presents an opportunity to further the process of healing and reconciliation that is a primary mission of today's followers of Te Kooti. So what in Auckland was an art exhibition in the big city, will be in Gisborne a more broadly cultural event actively involving local Church and Maori community groups, the Army and local schools.



Te Kooti is, however, only one of many ghosts who populate Davis's poem, ghosts as diverse in time, place, and significance as the Princess Diana, modern Maori leader Matui Rata, Heloise and Abelard, the Christ child (El Nino), Ishmael, His poem is a station, a gathering place where the standards of these departed do ride the breeze, not to

Grand Concourse, showing both Hau flags
Leigh Davis. Photo courtesy of Patrick Reynolds.

be brought alive as people but recovered for contemporary purposes as challenging and compelling figures of collective memory. Davis does not fetishize them as transcending history, nature and language but as figures who *transfixed* the worlds of desire, knowledge and power they inhabited. This is what makes them hieratic figures in his book, why they remain regardless of how those worlds have treated them, despite the ambivalence or unease which they continue to represent or provoke, the royals to him.



In these poems, New Zealand, the larger reaches of its post-contact history and its geography, is a constant reference point for worlds of desire, knowledge and power shaped and reshaped by language and technology. In the country of earth-bound ghosts, natural processes like hemispheric weather systems—the Southern Oscillation (*Pacific's disturbed*), tropical Cyclone Susanna (*The Temptation of the World*)—the migrations of birds, the flight paths of bees, the ferocious marriages of women and men, acquire their sometimes prophetic meanings through association with systems of circulation of culture and information employing satellite, wireless radio, semaphore flags, speech and writing. Knowingly or otherwise, earth-bound ghosts earn their colours in these worlds by transfixing them in word or act with the challenge of change.

—WYSTAN CURNOW

A Brief Description of the Whole World is the title of an A4 magazine with stapled pages and desktop covers edited by Alan Loney. In the grand tradition of little magazines it is polemical, experimental and visibly ephemeral. It has run for 9 issues since December 1995, 50-70+ pages an issue, and features regular contributors and a poetic Loney refers to as 'oppositional'. Each issue until the last (April 1998) carries an editorial essay by Loney which contextualises the contents in the broader field of national and international literary politics. Loney's essays taken together amount to a manifesto and a cultural history. They proclaim, as the title does, what the reader might be likely to find and expected to do in the act of reading—' The path of the text is not the movement of the work in its progress down and across a number of pages, but the life of the work in the activity of its readers'. They also trace trajectories across textual theory, the body of the New Zealand poetic, and the presence/absence of the poet Loney. In number 8 Loney's essay is titled 'The Other Tradition'. He states '..no literary magazine in New Zealand is fully representative of the scope and variety of the poetry written here...and none publishes regularly, if at all the work of the other tradition'. Loney is far too sophisticated and complex a thinker to try to put a box round that phrase 'the other tradition'. Rather each of his essays which precede no.8 (sadly his last) tackles a different angle on 'oppositional' poetics. 'On Clarity', 'The Path of the Text' 'Who do I write for?', and 'What Are Poets For?' are some of their titles and together they amount to a manifesto of what lies outside or beside or beyond 'the mainstream' and is, in Loney's view, persistently underrecognised, undervalued, underread.

Last year's *Anthology of New Zealand Poetry in English* (Oxford) edited by Jenny Bornholdt, Gregory O'Brien and Mark Williams doesn't publish anything by Loney which seems to prove his point. It does publish poems by some of Loney's fellow travellers, regular contributors to *A Brief Description* like Michele Leggott, Murray Edmond and Alan Brunton, but the most marked differences between the anthology and Loney's magazine are intellectual-the contexts in which Loney places the 'other tradition' are profoundly different from the cultural/historical introduction of the anthology. These differences seem to me to mark, as they have for some years, a difference in textual thinking, the thinking that is done inside, around and about texts, that goes on in poetry anthologies, reviews and magazines, a difference often articulated as postmodern.

Bornholdt, O'Brien and Williams argue sensibly for an inclusive, non privileging representation of New Zealand poetry, 'ultimately [based] on principles of literary value. That is to say, poems have not been included unless they hold some interest to us as poetry.' If you come to this phrase fresh from Loney's careful, referenced but passionate examination of the text, the poet, the reader, the world, over 8 issues of *A Brief Description,* it seems an inadequate appeal to the reader on a shared but unexamined set of assumptions about something called poetry, located in the sensibility of three people who do your choosing for you. Loney's insistence throughout his work as a poet, editor and printer, on what has been left out from a text, the spaces that invade and surround it, demands the reader is at least aware of the act of choice that governs any text. Loney makes incompleteness apparent, on the page and in the poem, as an articulated poetic, which in itself acts to nuance and modify the formal perfections offered by a collection such the *Anthology* and to complicate its urbane and comprehensive survey of what the poetic field(s) in New Zealand might be. In his 1992 collection Missing Parts Loney comments he doesn't want to write 'perfect individual poems' any more.It is just this sense of unfinished imperfect collective process that is important to the work published in *A Brief Description* and what acts as a dialogue partner to the weighty perfected and individualised *Anthology.* One of the ways I would characterise this difference would be to say that the Anthology invites a reader-to listen, enjoy, understand–but the Description needs one-you are demanded upon, forced to make your effort to be present in the 'whole world'.

According to Loney New Zealanders' favourite form of poetry discussion is the survey, a non discussion–'symbolic gestures rather than analytical ones, judgements rather than interpretations.'(no 8). This piece is supposed to do just that-survey what is happening in New Zealand poetry. Well you could say a number of things about what is happening. Here are a few of them. There is a new poetry press, Pemmican Press, publishing beautiful small hand set editions of work by Harry Ricketts, Chris Orsman and Ingrid Horrocks, poets also published in *Landfall* or *Sport.* The neXt generation has appeared and pronounced its innovation and succession in Mark Pirie's anthology *The NeXt Wave* (Otago University Press 1998) with a long introduction about GenX writing and claiming, of course, distance and difference from its predecessors. New poets have appeared-Kate Camp, Kapka Kassabova who won the Best First Book Award for her praised collection *All Roads Lead to The Sea,* poems about being an immigrant–and Bill Manhire's Creative Writing course, which produced both Camp and Kassabova, continues to be a fertile proving ground for new

writers. A number of established writers have produced new collections. Vincent O'Sullivan's *Seeing You Asked* is his first entirely new collection since 1986, sharp enjoyable occasional poems, and C. K.Stead's *Straw into Gold,* new and selected poems, is his first collection for seven years.Bill Manhire and Chris Orsman have produced work about Antarctica, both preceding and following their visit as Poets at the Pole earlier this year–

> where what-
> ever pours is wind,
> is ice, forgetting itself
> at last in light
>
> in quiet line, horizon
>
> –Bill Manhire 'Antarctic Stone' from
> *Homelight An Antarctic Miscellany* by
> Nigel Brown, Bill Manhire, Chris Orsman.)

Orsman's work in *South and Black South* focuses on Antarctic exploration and the continent projected into our collective imaginary. Anne French, Bernadette Hall, Roma Potiki, Jenny Bornholdt, Harry Ricketts, Vivienne Plumb, and James Norcliffe have new collections in the last two years which are all accomplished, individual, moving, satirical/lyrical, playful and engage with place, gender and race in ways which seem more or less to do with their generation and temperament and not with the zeitgeist, if indeed poetry is its register. I continue to think though that at the edges, wherever they are, poetry is as revealing a place as any to read what is happening in deep mental space, across and through time. Antarctica is a case in point. What could be more suggestive of postmodernity than Orsman's sequence of poems South about the processes of recording and representation which accompanied Scott's fatal journey to the white continent, the 'primum mobile' of Antarctica'? Why has Antarctica emerged as a significant point in the national poetic, a place to write from, in the last two years? Is the presence of a huge white contested space to the south of us an invitation to millenial revisioning?

The *Anthology* uses a classifying structure which is also used in Allen Curnow's latest collection *Early Days Yet 1997.* The *Anthology* starts from the most recent poet (Chris Orsman) and moves backwards, locating poets at the point at which they began publishing. This is fine for poets whose work clearly remains within a 'period', but seems very odd when Curnow, still the major contemporary poet, comes in between Denis Glover and A.R.D Fairburn, both 'historical' in a

number of ways. Within each selection time moves forwards, so you seem to read into the future at the same time as you turn pages towards the past. This has the effect, for me, anyway, of swimming hopelessly against a tide. Just as you surface to 'now', you're back to the past again. *Early Days Yet* also starts from Curnow's most recent work and moves back with selections from earlier books, but I find the effect more like geology than swimming. It is as if Curnow's work is piled into something high and solid, showing the layers and continuations in Curnow's poetic, long sequences over time of orderly blocks of words on the page, which shape and contain the pressure and anxiety of Curnow's complex transactions with the world and the word. Something has been built here, and as New Zealanders we inhabit it. Curnow's poetry has reached the status of being invisible in the language-he is frequently quoted with no attribution, lines so familiar they constitute a vernacular.

Curnow and the *Anthology* represent different assumptions about poetic praxis, readerships and national tradition to the writers who are published in *A Brief Description of the Whole World.* Of course a number of these writers are well known and acclaimed-Leggott, Edmond, Brunton—and what Alan Loney is saying about postmodernity and the text is far from new. What I think is important about these conjunctions is that the material ephemerality and insistence on text as a cognitively materialist medium, characteristic of work produced and edited by Loney, acts to contextualise and challenge the essentially modernist celebration of the perfected high cultural moment/tradition enacted in the Oxford anthology. To see what is happening in New Zealand poetry not just in the last couple of years but over the last decade, you have to recognise that these different literary politics and poetics react on each other like erosion on a building or water on a page—that process is what's interesting and its the whole thing you have to look at.

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—LYDIA WEVERS

"Dis Nigeria Sef": Ken Saro-Wiwa as the Poet Who Wasn't

Three years after the execution of Nigerian author and environmental activist Ken Saro-Wiwa, a seemingly insignificant detail in the media's coverage of the event remains troubling: the use of the term "poet" to describe Saro-Wiwa, particularly in much of the television and radio coverage. Certainly Saro-Wiwa was a poet, but his contributions to Nigerian poetry were minimal; especially when compared to his literary achievements in other areas: as a novelist, newspaper columnist, publisher, and writer of the popular Nigerian situation comedy "Basi & Co." that for six years was enjoyed by an audience of over thirty million.

Why then was Saro-Wiwa presented to Americans as a prototypical Nigerian poet? It could be argued that the label "poet" always confers to the troublesome postcolonial writer a set of assumed political values: among them literary universality, nonviolence, and economic disengagement. As a poet for the purposes of the broadcast media, Saro-Wiwa would then become even more patently innocent of the crimes with which he was accused; while as a prose writer the improbability of his complicity in the deaths of his political rivals in Ogoniland still had to be debated in the pages of *Harper's Magazine* and *The New Yorker*. Or, to put it in terms of the media in question, perhaps a regime that killed poets obviously deserved more international condemnation than a regime that killed television writers.

However the label "poet" was probably attached to Saro-Wiwa for far more pragmatic reasons. Saro-Wiwa's short lyric poems were more easily smuggled out of prison than his longer works, they came to the attention of the international news media more readily than his posthumously published prison memoir and novel (by Penguin), and, most importantly, because of their brevity could be easily appended to pleas from human rights organizations, particularly those based on the Internet.

But to say that Saro-Wiwa may be a minor Nigerian poet does not necessarily mean that his poetry is unimportant in the study of contemporary Nigerian poetics for at least three reasons. First, Saro-Wiwa's work challenges simplistic assumptions about the role of traditional oral literature in contemporary Nigerian literature. Second, his poems like those of J.P. Clark and Christopher Okigbo render the Nigerian Civil War as a founding literary event. For Saro-Wiwa the central drama in his nation's poetry is civil war, not decolonization, and he chooses his political metaphors accordingly. Finally, because the poems exist in the context of international discourse about human rights (a discourse that ultimately failed Saro-Wiwa), they dramatize the debate among African literary figures about the use of English as a world language in a way profoundly different from either Chinua Achebe the globalist or Ngugi wa Thiong'o the localist.

Saro-Wiwa leaves a complicated literary legacy and one that is as inextricable from his television writing as it is from his environmental activism. Rather than sentimentalize African oral culture and uncritically assume the position of the *griot* as singer and storyteller, his writing was literally mediated by television.[1] He even wrote that his task as a writer addressing a group of readers was to give name recognition to his native Ogoni people: "It was a television technique, designed to leave the name indelibly in their minds."[2]

However, somewhat disingenuously perhaps, Saro-Wiwa also made the argument that his television work represented an extension of West African oral traditions. As his title of short stories adapted from the series indicates (*Basi and Company: A Modern African Folktale*), he defended the situation comedy format as an extension of traditional storytelling. So if his sit-com offered one-dimensional stock characters, unchanging and incapable of moral drama, such characters weren't necessarily imports from the West and the devices of television comedy could be seen as ultimately closer to "African narrative methods" than "the European novel with its flashbacks, psychological analyses and progressive development of character."[3] Of course, at about the same time, Nobel Prize winning fellow Nigerian Wole Soyinka was showing his genteel contempt for contemporary media and *Mandela's Earth* is full of Soyinka's cultural clichés about television.[4]

In Saro-Wiwa's work the distance between the genres of poetry and television writing is not necessarily maintained. By the time he writes "A Walk in the Prison Yard" the condensed space of the situation comedy has become the condensed space of the prison and the stock characters are just as ridiculous and clearly delineated:

> You, Private, just how many children
> Do you have and how much do you earn?
> The Captain's dirty whores came last night
> To see the tall anthropophagite,
> Swooped like vultures on my dinner
> Emptied the pot and broke the china
> . . .
> The mad Major drove in yesterday
> Picking a prostitute on the way
> He spent a long time wagging his tail
> In the other section of the jail

Furthermore, even though the poem is written from the point of view of a prisoner serving a lengthy sentence, the events all take place in the Aristotelian twenty-four hour time frame of the typical sitcom.

Although Soyinka defended Saro-Wiwa during his detention and expressed his outrage to the world community after his execution,[5] in many ways the two men represented radically different approaches to Nigerian literature, especially with regard to their treatment of internal warfare. Soyinka writes:

I find no poetry in slaughter fields,
No lyric grace; redemptive passion, no.
Only that which came and went, as others –
The blaze of empires, salvation's ashes,
The crunch of cinders in time's cul-de-sac.[6]

If Soyinka equates poetry with "lyric grace" and "redemptive passion" the chaotic Biafran civil war of 1966 to 1970 could never be his subject, even though it was a crucial literary event for other poets and not only motivated Saro-Wiwa's *Songs in a Time of War* (1985), but also J.P. Clark's *Casualties* (1970) and the work of martyred Biafran poet Christopher Okigbo.

In comparison with works by Clark and Okigbo, Saro-Wiwa's *Songs in a Time of War* has been criticized for its superficiality and contrivances.[7] But when compared to Soyinka, a poem like "Ogale—An Evacuated Town" offers a dramatic counterpoint to the literary niceties of the Nobel Prize winner:

A lone lean dog
Scrounging for food
Reaps human skulls
In a shallow gutter

The town itself is not a vaunted symbol of abstract conquest like Soyinka's metaphysical ashes and cinders, but is rather squalidly personified by Saro-Wiwa:

For Ogale out in the dreary rain
Her legs apart like a cheap prostitute
Exposed, utterly exposed.
Ogale is a ravished woman.

It is a landscape that Saro-Wiwa's narrator returns to in his better known *Sozaboy: A Novel in Rotten English*: "Many of the villages that I always see when I am driving to the front or returning to our camp in the hospital school are all empty ... And all the houses have fall down or just ready to fall down because the bullet have made hole in the roof and the rain have entered the house and there is nobody to take care of anything at all."[8]

As a member of a small ethnic group on oil rich lands, which had a history of mistreatment from the Nigerian Federal government, Saro-Wiwa had a natural sympathy for the Biafran rebels, but in the war itself he evaluated the Ogoni position realistically as a choice between

"existing as one of 200 or so ethnic groups in Nigeria or as one of 50 or so ethnic groups in secessionist Biafra"[9] and consequently chose the Federal side. But in "Epitaph for Biafra" Saro-Wiwa shows his ambivalence:

> They will play at Rebels
> And Vandals
> Fill the nation with blood
> And scandal.
>
> Then they will return as agents
> And angels
> Laughing and weeping and begging
> For minor mercies.

The Biafran rebels are transformed into "agents" and "angels," two terms that are not necessarily mutually exclusive, if the paranoia of Joseph Conrad and the visionary ecstasy of William Blake are both accepted as influences from the West on Nigerian literature.

Elsewhere Saro-Wiwa more explicitly shows the influence of what he calls "my bard Blake" and Blake's diction serves as a model for a poetry that reaches beyond the upper strata of an educated elite. This is important because the problem of inter-class communication may lie the heart of the wider debate in postcolonial studies about the use of English as a world language. Chinua Achebe, in his position as the patriarch of Nigerian literature, has argued that the use of English by Nigerian writers allows them to "speak of African experience in a world-wide language." In answer to Achebe and to Nigerian poet Gabriel Okara, Kenyan writer Ngugi wa Thiong'o has charged that since language serves two purposes—as a repository of culture and as a means for communication—the use of English propagates colonial cultural values and makes communication outside the elite classes impossible.

Saro-Wiwa would seem to support Achebe and Okara in "The Language of African Literature: A Writer's Testimony" by claiming that "African literature is written in several languages, including the extra African languages of English, French, and Portuguese." However, while he makes what would seem to be a reactionary argument for the use of "standard" English rather than Africanized variants, he does so in defense of inter-class communication and a broader definition of Nigerian literary culture:

> With regard to English, I have heard it said those who write in English should adopt a domesticated "African" variety of it. I myself have experimented with the three varieties of English spoken and written in Nigeria: pidgin, "rotten," and standard. I have used them in poetry, short stories, essays, drama, and the novel. I have tried them out in print, on stage, on the radio, and with television comedy. That which carries best and which is most popular is standard English, expressed simply and lucidly. It communicates and expresses thoughts and ideas perfectly. (157)

The earlier *Songs in Time of War*, however, ends with a long poem in dialect, one of Saro-Wiwa's "experiments," "This Nigeria Sef" which states the problem differently:

> Oder people dey speak one language
> Your own come pass two hundred:
> Sanu, ekaro, deeyira, tank you, doo
> kakifo, nonsense, you no go fit take one!
> Nigeria, you too like borrow borrow
> You borrow money, cloth you dey borrow
> You borrow motor, you borrow aeroplane
> You borrow chop, you borrow drink
> Sotey you borrow anoder man language
> Begin confuse am with your confusion
> Anytin you borrow you go confuse am to nonsense
> Idiot debtor, wetin you go do
> When de owners go come take dem tings?

If the borrowing of English is simply in keeping with Nigeria's status as a debtor nation, what moral judgement is being passed on the use of English by the general population?

At his death Saro-Wiwa was reportedly working on a novel in his native Khana and may have ultimately embraced Thiong'o's position, but the drama of his arrest, trial, and execution suggests reasons to use English as a world language that are more crassly political and more obviously related to personal survival in the turbulent culture of Nigeria in the mid nineteen-nineties than the literary tone of the debate would suggest. The use of a native language assumes no threat of oppression to the writer by anything other than the remnants of traditional colonial powers. By writing in a world language Saro-Wiwa was able to draw international attention to the plight of the Ogoni people and his own dire circumstances when he was charged with the

murder of four Ogoni elders. But Saro-Wiwa's show trial and subsequent execution and the failure of English speaking literary culture to save him, even at the Auckland conference, may have proved Thiong'o right. Even as the political climate changes again with Soyinka returning to Nigeria as a cultural hero, the promise of a new period of Nigerian literary activity is problematized by Saro-Wiwa's poetic legacy.

Notes

1. Of course Saro-Wiwa did publish his own collection of folktales translated from his native Khana, but he prefaced it with the following reservations: "The pre-literate society which these tales indicate is certainly gone; the Ogoni still fish and farm but their lives are ringed around today, not by spirits but by oil wells and gas flares, and the harsh crudity of Nigerian politics which threatens their very survival as a people." See Ken Saro-Wiwa, *The Singing Anthil: Ogoni Folk Tales* (Lagos: Saros, 1991)
2. Ken Saro-Wiwa, *A Month and a Day: A Detention Diary* (New York: Penguin, 1995) p. 65.
3. Ken Saro-Wiwa, "Author's Note," *Basi and Company* (Lagos: Saros, 1987).
4. Wole Soyinka, *Mandela's Earth* (New York: Random House, 1988).
5. See Wole Soyinka, "Epilogue: Death of an Activist," *The Open Sore of a Continent: A Personal Narrative of the Nigerian Crisis* (New York and Oxford: Oxford UP, 1996) pp. 145-153.
6. *Mandela's Earth* p. 51.
7. See for example Abiola Irele, "Ken Saro-Wiwa," *Ogoni's Agonies: Ken Saro-Wiwa and the Crisis in Nigeria* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 1998) p. 259.
8. Ken Saro-Wiwa, *Sozaboy: A Novel in Rotten English* (Essex: Longman, 1994) p. 128.
9. Ken Saro-Wiwa, *A Month and a Day* 50.

—ELIZABETH LOSH

Inside Out: Spatial Retracings in Some Recent South African Poetry

"Self-proclaimed language but actually speech, deluded in believing itself to be completely alive, and violent, for it is not capable of protect[ing] itself or \defend[ing] [itself]' (dunatos men amuni ecuto) except through expelling the other and especially *its own* other, throwing it outside and below, under the name writing."
—Jacques Derrida(1976:39)

In South Africa poets are legion. Amid raging debates on the significance and value of the poetry produced by these poets, one is constantly reminded of how the decades of repression which once ruled life in South Africa did not quell literary production. In contradistinction to the erasures and silences white minority domination sought to effect on cultural life in South Africa, poets flourished in every conceivable site: in journals, theatres and community halls; at political rallies; during labour strikes; on factory floors and even at funerals. In the barren soil of the "dry white season", of censorship and bans, of which Mongane Wally Serote (1974) speaks, poets sprouted and their voices spread across the land.

Reflecting on this, I am reminded of what Samuel Beckett (1990) said when asked why the Irish have produced so many fine writers under such oppressive conditions: British imperialism and religious fundamentalism stung the Irish into song, he is reported to have said. In South Africa, racial domination had a similar effect. Apartheid, with all its malevolent paranoia spawned a thousand voices against it. It seems as if poets wrote and spoke in the belief that if injustice is cursed often and virulently enough, it will succumb to the incantatory power of language.

Take as an example these lines from "rap 1" by the performance poet, Lesego Rampolokeng(1990):

> when inhumanity came
> i became game
> to hunt down with guns
> to fill greed's barns
> i tied my fate to a bullet
> my soul embraced like a harlot
> a necessary evil
> to defeat the devil

The moral hyperbole of these lines is a register of the intense symbolic resistance minority domination produced in South Africa. We can agree with Michel Foucault (1972) that power is not only repressive, exclusionary or censorious, but also productive: it produces its opposite in the very act of trying to annul it. The extent to which South African poetry was shaped by both the stunting designs of Apartheid as well as by visions of a future after apartheid underscores this assertion. This work issued from energies and perspectives which sought to counter what Cabral(1980:141), referring to Apartheid, called "the largest concentration camp mankind has ever known". It now makes

up an important body of poetry against which current literary developments must be read.

With the democratisation of South Africa in 1994, poets moved into a space between the past and an unfolding future. This is the present space of transition in which poets, driven by creativity, venture into the changing inner and outer world to gather news, capture images, record sounds and articulate perceptions, insights and sensations. Such are the contingencies of poetics in post-apartheid South Africa.

In approaching the new poetry arising from this, I will provide an outline of how some poets are textualising change. This is done by focusing on private and public themes in the work of four or five poets. These themes, in turn, are related to interior and exterior forms of spatiality. Space, is here applied to signify the virtual spaces constructed by poetic texts. Reference to the social and natural spaces in the actual world is embedded in this notion.

The notion of "retracing", dangling above this essay, seeks to establish a link between past and present. This is to suggest that nothing ever is unprecedented in literature and culture. In the light of assertions that post-apartheid South African literature has undergone an inward turn, away from a preoccupation with external social and political actualities, towards inner, private, personal and intimate concerns, shaped by an aesthetics of interiority, such a retracing, in my view, is necessary.

Political change in South Africa has certainly triggered aesthetic reconsiderations. The instabilities and uncertainties arising from a context of transition, along with new found freedoms dislodged the fixed race, class and gender identities of the past. Below this, other channels are opening and yet other post-colonial waters are flowing in to mix with the cultural waters of the past. Once, scores of poets conceived a poetics in the stolid image of segregation. It produced a spatial aesthetics which sundered the world into two opposing domains: the private and the public. This was posited on an interior and exterior spatiality and a myriad of other locations which fall within this inside\outside framing of space. This crippling binary practice is now giving way to a new accentuated sense of how interiority and exteriority are interdependent. To illustrate this, I must take a step backwards to retrieve a form of spatial poetics informed by a rigorous aesthetics of interiority.

Lionel Abrahams, a leading South African exponent of private and personal themes, is a paradigmatic instance. In concentrating, as he has for decades, on lyrical interiority, he projects his work as a counter to

what he considers a debasement of true poetics by writers striving for social relevance. In the "Flesh" (1996) he writes:

> Busy in my skin in my house, I receive
> rumours and news. Again and again I hear
> about too much death, to much pain,
> too much emptiness, the culpabilities,
> relentless causes and terrible ends.
> Hearsay comes muffled, distorted,
> diminished through the walls of my house.
> Busy in my safe place, the attention I pay
> takes the form of distraction.

Here isolation from the violent late-apartheid world is registered as a deliberate distancing from an exterior space of "relentless causes and terrible ends". The empty suffering produced by such externality is contrasted with the meaning of personal agony endured in an interior private space: The speaker, "ignorant of the struggle", states that: "The walls of my house contain/ sufficient travail,/ the floor lies ready to bruise me,/ beat out my breath". The semantic structure of the poem rests on what we may term a sustained pattern of non-equivalent contrasts. It produces a rhetorical displacement of the external world by privileging interior space over exteriority. The priority given to the interior world with all its menace of unseen private pain, is however proffered by using the external world as its foil.

More significantly, this interiority, implicitly presented as the proper subject of lyrical poetry establishes its value by drawing a line between internal and external space. It constructs a rhetorical "wall" against the outer world. The anthesis of this inward aesthetics can be glimpsed in the blatantly public aesthetics expressed in the fragment by Rampolokeng. These two forms of writing, the one displacing exteriority, and the other repressing interiority obviously are counterparts. The one-dimensionality produced by the rigid closures of these two contrasting aesthetics is evident. In paraphrasing the citation from Jacques Derrida, which pertains to the traditional opposition between speech and writing, and which floats above this essay, we can identify these two forms of writing as self-asserting gestures. Both regard themselves as the true poetic register. They expel their own others to spaces external and beneath themselves. In these articulations there is no intuition that the hierarchical oppositions they construct might be accomplices.

Many other poets have, however, sought to articulate the interplay between interior and exterior spaces. Such poets have not sought to pit

their work against public life. Nor do they reject interiority. Rather, they explore the relationship between these spatial dimensions. Ingrid De Kok and Jeremy Cronin are two such poets. Both published new collections in 1997, but in the past, and especially during a time when the orthodoxies of exteriority and interiority reigned in their respective aesthetic ghettoes, they explored the spatial complexities inherent to a divided society. They did not succumb to what Frederic Jameson (1985:20) calls a shiftless tendency to draw a hermetic division between "private and public, between the social and the psychological, or the poetic and the political, between history and society and the individual which maims our existence as individual subjects and paralyses our thinking about time and change, just as surely as it alienates us from our speech itself". Instead, they highlighted the ways in which interiority and exteriority presuppose each other.

Cronin who, during the 1980's spent seven years in prison on charges of subverting the Apartheid State, is a leading activist. His first collection is significantly titled *Inside* (1983). This signifies that the poetry was written inside prison. It further signals a state of internal exile, thus placing the prison in a kind of deep interior space concealed and demarcated from the external social space of society. The title further marks this internal space as interior space with reference to the external space of exile situated beyond the borders of South Africa. Consequently the South African social space itself is designated as a form of internal space in the sense of being "inside" the country, as opposed to outside of it. Read this way, then, to be inside prison also means to be removed from, and therefore, to be outside society. Thus, a whole chain of shifting interior and exterior spatial positions is evoked.

Reading the poetry collected in *Inside* one quickly realises just how the internal space of prison, despite the enclosures of prison, does not result in insurmountable isolation for the poet. A sense of community emerges among the prisoners. But, ironically, the interior space of prison is not the interiority of personal and private space. Here the public fact of imprisonment is explored with regard to the deleterious effect it has on the intimate life of the poet.

In his second, and most recent collection, *Even the Dead* (1997), Cronin, writes about the transition in South Africa. He probes the connections and disjunctures between the public events leading from the State of Emergency imposed in 1985, to the advent of democracy. He chronicles the violence of these times; satirises the compromises made during the negotiations between former political adversaries; probes the ironies of ideology and outlines the challenges to leadership

and governance in a democratic South Africa. Along with this, he explores the geographic space of South Africa as lived-in space. Likewise, but operating from a considerably less politically defined position, Ingrid de Kok has also avoided the simplifications which insist that interior and exterior spaces are best managed when separated. In her first collection, *Familiar Ground*(1988) she thematises the relationship between the private and the public in a context where social pressures work to suppress personal suffering. This is most tellingly expressed in the poem "Small Passing". It is based on the real incident of a white woman who was told by a man not to mourn her still-born child "because the trials and horrors suffered daily by black women in this country are more significant than the loss of one white child".

The poem is composed around a series of negations of the mother's body and her grief. It provides a perspective on the larger world where a newspaper boy is exposed to the rain; a woman queues at a bus stop; a baby grows up without her mother; and Mandela's daughter tries "to find her father/through the glass," in prison. It culminates in a confluence of the white woman's personal suffering with the social injustices faced by black women. In the process the racial barriers erected between white and black women are bridged by the deeply felt and shared personal experiences of maternal loss. It results in a poem where private and public suffering are both recognised and inter-articulated so that human suffering and grief are not slighted by crudely racial or other negating differentiations.

In her latest collection, *Transfer* (1987) De Kok refines this procedure of reading the external social world through the delicate lens of the intimate, the bodily and the familial. The title of the collection encodes the notions of psychological and linguistic transference from the self to the other; from female to male; from black to white; from dream to reality; from the personal to the social; from interiority to exteriority; from the writer to the reader and back across these circuits in a context of instability and change. In the title poem, "Transfer", there is an interplay between life in and around a family house built four decades ago, "to hold private unhappiness in tack,/ safe against mobile molecular growths/ of city, developers and blacks", and a rapidly changing social reality resulting in the inexorable invasion of this private space by the shifting demographics in what was once an exclusively white neighbourhood.

There are now several poets who fully engage this intricate spacial dynamics. Karen Press's *Echo Location; A Guide for Sea Point Residents and Visitors* (1998) writes with wit about the specific qualities of a circumscribed coastal locality shared by insiders and outsiders. She

playfully satirises insider notions of locality and the pretensions of global translocality in a space where tourists and inhabitants interact and project their various identities at each other against the backdrop of the sea. Another poet, Seithlamo Motsapi, in his debut collection, *earthstepper/ the ocean is very shallow* (1995) turns natural elements like trees, the ocean, the sun and fire into startling metaphors for the interior desires, hopes, disenchantments, anger and rage of people emerging from the spatial confines of the past. Other and yet other themes are now crystallising in South African poetry in the space of freedom. Liberated from the simplifications of the past, yet still engaged with its effect, this infinitely more differentiated context poses new aesthetic demands on poets.

I have confined myself to some paradigmatic instances in recent South African poetry which explore the play of one set of spatial coordinates. In this retracing of the interconnectedness of interiority and exteriority I attempted to show, how some of these poets have woven more intricate textures into South African poetry. In the process they have contributed to the restoration of the expressive and illuminating values of poetic language. They have done so without erasing the varying and intricate relationships between the self and the world which their writing seeks to textualise, bring into view and make readable. Theirs is a poetics commensurate to the profound differentiations South African society, literature and culture are undergoing presently. All this suggests that if South African poetry, as is claimed, has now turned inward, this inwardness has not everywhere closed itself off from the world.

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—ANDRIES WALTER OLIPHANT

Brittle Surfaces

To the Director General of Arts, Culture, Science, and Technology

You may know that the exhibition which opened this past Saturday at the South African National Gallery in Cape Town is called *Land and Lives: Pioneer Black Artists.* But what is a "pioneer"? For both of us, I imagine, the word speaks of frontiers: the thud of the woodsman's axe in the pristine forest; the future unfurling in the schooner's bow wave; the sod turning redly under the harrow, and the ploughman's shadow moving ahead towards new horizons. To be a pioneer, in the old, ideologically charged sense of the word, meant to break new ground, in a spirit of innovation, against a field of resistances.

This is a highly eclectic exhibition. It contains some great examples of early modernist black South African art like John Mohl's "These Grew Out of an Ash Heap," Ernest Mancoba's "L'Ancêtre", and Peter Clarke's "Burning House". It also contains works that I'm sure neither of us know. But the show is most unusual perhaps for the way it tells the history of innovation and resistance. All the artists featured here were born before 1930, that is before the second catastrophic Land Act. All of them encountered tremendous obstacles in their attempts to establish careers in art making, but their problems went beyond

obvious racism or grinding poverty to include ethnographers trying to convince them of the utter distinctiveness of the "African mind", as well as various cloying forms of Liberal charity. For many of them, however, innovation was less a matter of radical experiment than of the life-sustaining influence of friends who gave them access to new ideas and images.

Land and Lives is one in a sequence of revisionist exhibitions that have attempted to change our understanding of race, modernity, and the artistic canon. This was also the aim of the 1985 *BMW Tributaries* show and 1988 Johannesburg Art Gallery's *The Neglected Tradition*, to name but two. In *Land and Lives*, however, curator Elza Miles offers a different perspective. What she does is bring to a level of consciousness a series of invisible connections: for instance, the surprising juxtaposition of Louis Maurice and Selby Mvusi (both of whom exhibited at the First Quadrennial Exhibition of South African Art in 1956), or Job Kekana and Ernest Mancoba (both of whom studied under Sister Pauline at the Diocesan College at Grace Dieu). To appreciate these synchronicities fully you need to turn to the catalogue. Rousseau, 1997. Elza Miles is one of this country's most important and least appreciated archivists. Over the years, in a career of fidgeting and ferreting, she has established a remarkable collection of information about unrecognised black artists. It is an archive based on interviews, stories, and records of training. But this unusual research obsession also entails a particular attitude towards the life of the artist and to self narration. In the catalogue, we read about Jan Schoeman, otherwise known as "Outa Lappies", who produces an autobiography on hundreds of elaborately embroidered flour bags. When Miles tells the story of his work and life as a *karretjiemens* she describes how he enjoys living in shelters built in trees. This is because, Miles says in the catalogue, "he does not want to obstruct nocturnal animals" (24). At first, you might think that this is a bizarre mistranslation. As a literary person, I find the sentence intriguing: it is an example of what linguists would call "free indirect discourse", a third person utterance that retains some sense of the voice of the person being described. For Outa Lappies, the worst sin is to become an obstacle around which the flow of being-in-the-world will have to deviate. Yet the sentence is also revealing of Miles's method: never speaking as an ethnographer, she allows herself to fall under the spell of autobiographical statements.

So the show tells a new story of influences and trends. It will allow you to trace the startling changes in Selby Mvusi's colour palette when he arrived in Kumasi in 1962; it reveals capillary connections between South African artists in exile in Paris. More than anything, however, it tells a complex story of the hybrid appropriation of landscape conven-

tions by black artists, and this is where I will bring my letter to a close, for I know you are a busy man. Fifties, sixties and seventies art historical analysis was bedevilled by the understanding that black artists appeared to have a different sense of spatial scale and perspective. In the past, this led critics to talk of an entirely different category of painting called "township art". More recently, historians have angrily rejected this racialized division of genres. *Land and Lives* dramatizes contradictions around the use of landscape conventions. Pioneer artists shown here did not simply reject linear or aerial perspective, the classic hilltop gaze of the Europeanized tradition; indeed, as in the case of John Koenakeefe Mohl, they sometimes accepted it wholeheartedly. More frequently, though, these artists adapted perspectival conventions to place a greater emphasis on the relationship between the self and the collective. Looked at from across the room, Gladys Mgudlandlu's "Three Men in Blue" seems like a conventional modernist landscape, reminiscent of Maggie Loubser. I know that you cannot be here, but if you were to approach the work, you would agree that the emphasis is not on a singular gaze from on high, but on pluralities: on the formal connection between blocks of cobalt, ultramarine and raw sienna, and groups of people. Shadows are detached from the individuals, as though projected into the scene from other figures outside the frame. There is a very similar, uncanny moment in H. E. Dhlomo's 1941 epic poem "Valley of a Thousand Hills". You may know this strange work, full of magpie borrowings from Milton, formulaic Zulu praises, and biblical phrases. Unlike conventional topographical poetry, in which there is an imagined excursion of the eye from plane to plane to a distant horizon, in Dhlomo the valley is already home. Consider this odd moment: "Drunk sprawl the sleepy vales, the herds graze dumb./ In peace and sloth a dappled snake parades/ Its beauty fierce . . . was it my ancestor?" Here the self addresses itself to the immediate surroundings, not to a distant prospect or future. There is even the radical possibility that the non-human may be a form of the self in another dimension: "Was it my ancestor?"Herbert Dhlomo was a friend and sponsor of Gerard Bhengu.

Land and Lives allows a rich variety of meditations on relations between self and collective, on conventions, resistance, and unfamiliar local influences; on the importance of patrons; on the variety of landscape representation, with everything from the multiplied perspective of Mgudlandlu's men or birds, to the intense planar compression of Anna Mashinini's "My House", where the dwelling is hardly large enough to contain a life.

In the end, though, I must admit to a slight scepticism about the notion of the "pioneer". What this show represents is an attempt to

complicate our understanding of South African modernism by revealing a set of local connections and influences, out of which something new and strange was born. As a physicist you would have, I imagine, some sympathy for the idea that whole new theories may be borne from the jostling of little propositions. Perhaps like me, too, when you are able to look at this show, the dawning of your enjoyment will be coloured by a certain sadness. We are desperate to know more about the complex interaction between black painters and sculptors, here and in exile, in the early twentieth-century. However, in the very moment when we are beginning to rediscover our early "pioneers", this and other galleries have all but stopped purchasing work by South Africans. Conservation is grinding to a halt; storage conditions are appalling. Great painters like Anna Mashinini have quietly faded away. And of her work, brittle gouache on paper, the same as that characteristically used by Mgudlandlu, who can tell how it will survive? Look now, before it flakes away completely. Politicians—and I am sure you are as worried about this as I am—are driving us to define "Heritage" mainly in terms of an ethnicized crafts industry, and this in the very hour of our first coming to understand the complexity of our artistic past. We call on you to dedicate more funds for acquisition, preservation, storage, and research into works such as the ones on this show. Above all, we hope you have the chance to visit Cape Town and enjoy the chiming together of synchronous lives in this intriguing exhibition which, on the 31st of October, I had the great honour to declare open.

Yours sincerely,
DAVID BUNN

Contributor Notes

LOUIS ARMAND was born in Sydney, Australia and since 1994 has been a permanent resident of the Czech Republic. He has two collections of poetry, *Seances* (Twisted Spoon, 1998) and *The Viconian Paramour* (forthcoming from x-poezie).

RACHEL TZVIA BACK has lived in Israel since 1981. Her chapbook, *Litany,* was published by Meow Press in 1995. Recent work will appear in the anthology *Dreaming the Actual: Israeli Women Writers in the 90s* (forthcoming SUNY Press).

DOUGLAS BARBOUR lives and teaches in Edmonton, Alberta. His books of poetry include *Visible Visions: Selected Poems* (NeWest, 1984) and *Story for a Saskatchewan Night* (rdc, 1989).

ROBIN BLASER, born in 1925, Denver, Colorado; Canadian citizen, 1972. *The Holy Forest* (collected poems), 1993. Just completed the libretto for Sir Harrison Birtwistle's opera *The Last Supper,* premiere, Berlin, 2000.

CHRISTIAN BÖK is the author of *Crystallography* (Coach House, 1994). His favourite word in English is "eunoia"—not only because is the shortest word in the language to contain all five vowels, but also because it means quite literally "a pretty thought."

BEV BRAUNE was born in Jamaica and has been living in Australia since 1983. Her second volume of poetry is *Camouflage* (Bloodaxe Books, UK, 1998).

COLIN BROWNE lives in Vancouver and is currently working on a new film, *Altar,* the visual component of which is a photograph of the ship's company of a WWII corvette, HMCS Mayflower, in Halifax, Canada, 1942.

ALAN BRUNTON has worked with the New Zealand theatre group RED MOLE for 2 decades. He performs poetry with The Free Word Band. Recent work has appeared on CD *(33 perfumes of Pleasure)* and video *(Heaven's Cloudy Smile)* and as the book-length poem *Moonshine.*

DAVID BUNN's recent work has focused on contemporary South African cultural studies with particular emphasis on the relationship between texts, visual images, and landscapes. At present he is completing a book entitled *Land Acts: Modernity, Representation, and the Making of South African Space.*

CLINT BURNHAM lives in Vancouver. He is author of *The Jamesonian Unconscious* (Duke, 1995), *Steve McCaffery and His Works* (ECW, 1996), and *Be Labour Reading* (ECW, 1997). The poems that appear here are from *Buddyland* to be published by Coach House later this year.

YVETTE CHRISTIANSË is a South African-born poet who has also lived in Australia and now in New York where she teaches at Fordham University. A collection *Castaway* is due from Duke University Press in fall 1999.

SUSAN CLARK is editor of magazines *Raddle moon* and *Giantess* (with Christine Stewart and Lisa Robertson) and of a chapbook series called *Sprang Texts* (printing the texts of local readings as chapbooks).

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JEREMY CRONIN has published two collections of poetry, *Inside* (Ravan, 1983) and *Even the Dead* (Ravan 1997). He is a national executive member of the African National Congress and deputy general secretary of the South African Communist Party.

WYSTAN CURNOW is a poet and art critic. He has curated many exhibitions, most recently *ACTION REPLAY, Post-Object New Zealand Art in the 1970s.* His retrospective of the New Zealand painter, Colin McCahon, for the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, opens in 2000.

INGRID DE KOK lives in Cape Town, South Africa. She has published two volumes of poetry, *Familiar Ground* (Ravan, 1988) and *Transfer* (Snailpress, 1998) as well as essays on cultural issues in South Africa.

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JOHN HIGGINS is the author of *Raymond Williams: Literature, Marxism and Cultural Materialism* (Routledge) and the founding editor of the South African journal *Pretexts: Studies in Writing and Culture.*

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ALAN LONEY's latest book is *Sidetracks: Notebooks* 1976-1991 (Auckland UP, 1998) and his next is *Catalogue* due soon from Meow Press. He has recently retired as printer and co-director of The Holloway Press, University of Auckland, and moved to Melbourne, Australia.

ELIZABETH LOSH is a doctoral candidate at the University of California, Irvine.

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STEVE MCCAFFERY is the author of over 18 books of poetry, most recently *The Cheat of Words* (ECW Press). His collected writings, *North of Intention,* appeared from Roof Books in 1986. He is co-editor of *Imagining Language* (MIT Press, 1998) and a second collection of critical writings, *Prior to Meaning: the Protosemantic and Poetics,* is forthcoming. An online version of his typestract *Carnival Panel* I can be viewed at www.chbooks.com.

ERIN MOURÉ's eighth book of poems, *The Frame of a Book,* will be published by Anansi in Toronto in spring 1999. Also in 1999, Moveable Type in Toronto will publish her *Pillage Laud* as *A Moveable Text* (by email only: emoure@total.net or bobei@odyssee.net). Mouré also works as a translator and editor and is based in Montreal, Quebec.

KHULILE NXUMALO was born in Soweto in 1971 where he now works with the Gauteng government. His writing has appeared in South African and Canadian magazines.

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TOM ORANGE lives in London, Ontario. He is a doctoral candidate at the University of Western Ontario. His critical and creative works appear in *Nineteenth-Century French Studies, L'Esprit Createur, Queen Street Quarterly, Rampike,* and *Open Letter.*

MARGARET ORBELL is the author of eight books on Maori tradition, literature, and belief, including *The Natural World of*

the Maori (1985), *Hawaiki: A New Approach to Maori Tradition* (1985), *Waiata: Maori Songs in History* (1991), *Traditional Maori Stories* (1992) and *Maori Myth and Legend* (1995).

RICHARD KILLEEN lives in Auckland, New Zealand. He pursues a politics of remembering and forgetting with his multiple piece paintings that collect together a myriad of images. He also continues an obsession with artist books and collaborations of which "The Presence of the Dew" is one.

MARNIE PARSONS lives and works in London, Ontario. Her book, *Touch Monkeys: Nonsense Strategies for Reading Twentieth-Century Poetry* was published by the University of Toronto Press.

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Poet CATRIONA STRANG and clarinetist FRANÇOIS HOULE have worked together for many years. "The Clamorous Alphabet" their most recent collaboration, has recently been recorded for Periplum Records. The section included here appeared as part of the chapbook Steep (Seeing Eye, 1997). They live in Vancouver.

JAMES TAYLOR is the editor of *Boxkite: a Journal of Poetry and Poetics.* His most recent collection is *Smoke Proofs* (Paper Bark, Sydney, Australia).

MERVYN TAYLOR is a Trinidad born poet who now divides his time between his native island and Booklyn, New York. He is author of two collections of poetry: *An Island of His Own* (1992) and *The Goat* due in spring 1999, both from Junction Press.

SHARON THESEN is a Vancouver poet and editor. Her most recent book of poems is *Aurora.* With Ralph Maud, she has edited *Charles Olson and Francis Boldereff: A Modern Correspondence,* due this spring from Wesleyan Univ. Press.

JOHN TRANTER has published thirteen collections of poetry including a *Selected Poems* (1982), *The Floor of Heaven* (1992), *Gasoline Kisses* (Equipage, UK, 1997), and *Late Night Radio* (Polygon, Edinburgh, 1998). He is co-editor of the *Penguin Book of Modern Australian Poetry* and the editor of the free quarterly Internet magazine *Jacket* at http://www.jacket.zip.com.au/welcome.html.

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LYDIA WEVERS is currently principal researcher in the History of Print Culture Project at the Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand. She is a contributor to *The Oxford History of New Zealand Literature in English.*

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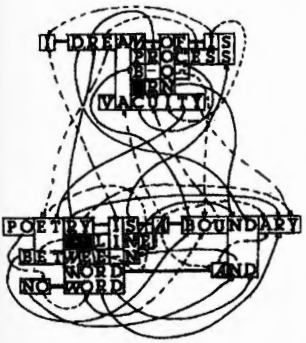

Rea Nikonova from *Lost and Found Times* issue 32

is a selection of texts and graphics from issues 1-39 of **Lost and Found Times.** It features the work of 170 contributors from North and South America, Europe and the former Soviet Union. The magazine was founded in 1975 by John M. Bennett and Douglas C. Landies and has been edited by Bennett since Landies' death in 1978. Bennett writes in his introduction "I enjoyed reading and publishing unusual work, work that at the time no one else seemed to be publishing". **Lost and Found Times** has created its own vital culture which its readers and contributors continue to both add to and draw from. Many of the latter have had a long relationship with the magazine and, through it, with each other, generating a high proportion of collaborative works. From its origins in mail art to its more recent participation at the edges of language (and what's coming to be called post-language) poetry, **Lost and Found Times** provides a model of how marginalised cultural workers can create productive areas of engagement within a network of activity.

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